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The Inconsistency of Infant-sprinkling,

WITH

CHRISTIAN-BAPTISM,

WITH

Religious USEFULNESS,

AND WITH

SALVATION BY GRACE ALONE.

Being a Reply to a *Treatise on Baptism* lately published, from a *Manuscript* of the late
Rev. Mr. MATTHEW HENRY.

In Six Letters to the Editor.

By JOSEPH JENKINS, A. M.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Gal. v. 9.

W R E X H A M :

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TO THE
Rev. Mr. R O B I N S,
Of D A V E N T R Y.

L E T T E R I.

Infant-baptism inconsistent with the nature of baptism.

Rev. S I R,

A Treatise written upon a controverted subject is a kind of challenge to the opposite side of the debate; at least, a proposal of certain arguments to consideration; and if the proposal be made in a friendly manner, it ought to be received, with thankfulness to the good intentions of the writer, even if the arguments have not the wished-for success. As also, the fair investigation of truth is the professed object of controversy, if the reasoning be calculated rather to mislead, than give information, any attempt to set the matter in its proper light, is equally deserving of a candid reception. The treatise you have ushered into the world comes more particularly within the application of these reflections, as it is announced to be a *practical treatise* chiefly. No tenet in religion is purely speculative. Baptism is a part of duty, which, if "*fundamental*," as Mr. Henry intinuates p. 1. or if a *first principle*, a leading testimony of man's regard

regard for Christ Jesus (which I take to be the Apostle's meaning, Heb. vi. 2. if he had reference to christian-baptism) it is of great importance to have right ideas of. But the design of this publication goes further. You are of opinion that Mr. *H.* has suggested observations, that make infant-baptism better understood, than it has usually been; and which, if heartily embraced, will make it also a powerful and operative principle through life. With the most cordial sincerity I assure you, that had I, upon a close and impartial perusal, been struck with its moral and religious influence, I would confess it without hesitation, and catch eagerly at the smallest scriptural authority for the practice. But if, on the contrary, it be inconsistent with Mr. *H.*'s own account of the *nature of baptism*—if the Author's arguments be inconsistent with *scripture*—if the genuine influence of infant-baptism be *not* that of *religion* or morality—but it may have a *pernicious effect* upon sentiments and manners, the Baptists act wisely and tenderly, in with-holding it from their children; and if, lastly, the word of God give sufficient intimation, that the indispensable *mode* of baptism is *immersion*, they may rest satisfied with that justification, however vehemently some of their opponents signify their “utter dislike” of them and their principles, and disingenuously manage their arguments against them. You will perceive that I have set before you, the out-lines of the remarks, upon which I mean to enlarge, in the course of this correspondence. To begin then, with Mr. *H.*'s account of the *nature of baptism*; we meet here with many thoughts that will be very grateful to pious minds amongst the Baptists. I do not indeed understand the propriety, of introducing a seeming analogy, between christian-baptism and any ceremonies of heathen origin, such as the initiation into the mysteries of *Mythra* and *Isis*. Surely, our Lord had no retrospect to them, to the *Priests of Cocytus*, or any other heathenish customs, when he instituted his ordinance; little less absurd would it be to deduce it from the ceremonial ablutions, or Proselyte-baptism

baptism of the *Jews*. For (not to say how unfavourable to sprinkling they are, the use of water in all being that of bathing or dipping) to make the Old-Testament rites the ground-work of baptism, would warrant those popish additions Mr. *H.* inveighs against p. 11. and 154, as “ dressing the spouse of Christ, in the paint and taw-
“ dry attire of an harlot.” I need not tell you, that when Dr. *Myddleton’s Letter from Rome*, charged the superstitions of that Church, with being imitations of heathenism, their Apologist fled directly to the Jewish rites, in attestation of their innocence. And as to the Profelyte-baptism, the most learned of the Pedobaptist-writers, before and since Mr. *H.’s* time (such as Dr. *Owen*, and Dr. *Jennings*, in his *Jewish-Antiquities* vol. 1. p. 136.) have proved, that there was no such practice, till several hundred years after Christ; that instead of Christ’s baptism being engrafted upon it, it was a poor imitation of baptism, as practised in the third or fourth century; besides, that if it were the fact, it would, in its effects, have before now destroyed baptism altogether, by maintaining it to be unnecessary to baptize the descendants, born after the baptism of the parents. (See *Emlyn’s previous question*, p. 485, or the *Reply to Mr. Pentycross* p. 22.) Supposing also, that these washings, or baptism were the ground-work of Christian-baptism, what has circumcision to do with it? The Pedobaptists seem at a loss on what to fix the footing of infant-baptism. Sometimes the Old-testament ablutions, sometimes the Profelyte-baptism, sometimes circumcision is adduced; and of late, a new-broached notion of the *patria potestas*,* as the best argument in its favour. But the ground is so frequently shifted,

* This notion is maintained by Dr. *PRIESTLY*, in his *HISTORY OF THE CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY*, and is the most harmless idea of infant-baptism I ever saw. The Dr. does not consider baptism as a substitute for circumcision; but argues, that the *PATERNAL-AUTHORITY* of the head of a family, which obtained in the Eastern and Roman nations, would have been sufficient to induce

shifted, that its stability looks very suspicious. Mr H. observes, p. 20. that " Christ as King hath *sole authority*, " to institute and appoint ordinances *that shall be binding.*" Is it not then better to trust to his explicit directions

induce Abraham to circumcise his family, merely as a profession of his own faith, without implying that the subjects of it had any interest, in the things signified by it; and that the same ideas would equally have lead a Jew or a Roman upon his conversion to christianity, to baptize his children, if not his domestic slaves. But (1) The particularity of the directions to Abraham, respecting the circumcision of his household, flatly contradicts the Dr's first principle, about the natural influence of the Patria-potestas in this case. Such directions would have been totally superfluous and unnecessary, if the Patriarch had understood his natural-authority to imply as much, and VICE VERSA. (2) If a Jew fancied any resemblance in the two rites, so as to accommodate baptism to circumcision (a prejudice which, after all, the Dr. cannot entirely divest himself of) it could amount to no more, than to baptize the males of his family, (3) The Dr's own concession, " That the Roman slaves were allowed to practice some of their religious rites," renders it improbable that a converted Roman (taught by the gospel also how abhorrent christianity is from involuntary compulsion) would understand baptism to be applicable to his domestic-slaves, merely as an appendage to his own baptism, as well as that the very institution represents the ordinance, as pertaining to men individually, not as members of families. (4) When all this, the Jailor's family, is said to believe, and Lydia's household to consist of brethren, Acts xvi. 34. 40. the only just conclusion is, that baptism was administered in consequence of the personal-profession of each, not by the authority of the heads of those families.-- As to the Dr's references to antiquity, they contain more than a suspicion, that the practice cannot be fairly deduced from scripture. But surely it is too bold a presumption, for speaking so decisively of its APOSTOLICAL-AUTHORITY, to say, " we are not able to trace its origin, therefore we are necessarily carried back into the age of the " Apostles for it" At this rate, unless we be able to fix the exact date of any corruption whatever, it is no corruption at all. I hope we have a better reason for keeping the Lord's day. But it is sufficient to reply in the present case, that infant-baptism being incompatible with the descriptions of baptism in the New-Testament, it can be no part of the christian-system, let it have originated how it might; and (besides that we are taught by his controversy with the REVIEWERS, not to trust too implicitly to the Dr's quotations from the Fathers) that infant-baptism was " not the uniform practice of the primitive christians" is clear from hence, that the writers of the two first centuries speak nothing that leads to it, but their accounts of baptism are directly opposite, nor can we reasonably suppose that TERTULLIAN, in the third century, would have hazarded the declaration, that infants have no need of it, if universal custom, for several hundred years, had established it. He does not insinuate that Sponsors were an innovation, any more than infant-baptism; which yet Dr. P. considers as such. Upon the whole, this scheme is equally improbable with that more prevalent.

rections, than he put to these shifts to defend a notion of your own? But waving this; I declare to you I am at a loss how to reconcile infant-baptism, with Mr *H*'s. general representation of the *nature of baptism*. Is it not a maxim of sound reasoning, that general rules involve their particular ones; and that no particular rules can be incompatible with, and still less subversive of the general rules? If then infant-baptism flatly contradict the general tenor, the nature and design of baptism, the wisdom of God never ordained such an institution, to supersede the meaning of his own ordinance. Let us hear Mr. *H* for illustration of this point. Perhaps it is inaccurate to give christian ordinances any other title, than their founder affixed to them. Hence I am not fond of the word *Sacrament*, which the usage of certain national-establishments of religion is not a better reason for retaining, than may be urged for the word *Transubstantiation*. But if the word mean an engagement to be the Lord's, as explained, p. 48. there is no aptitude in it, unless the engagement be *voluntary*; and you know, an infant is incapable of a voluntary engagement. Mr. *H*. spends many pages, in expatiating upon it as a *sign* and *seal*; and, willing to draw a parallel between circumcision and baptism, tell us, p. 4. that a Sacrament is a *sign and seal of the righteousness of faith*" for which he quotes Rom. iv. 11. But circumcision which is there spoken of, was not, as generally practised, a seal of the righteousness of faith, but a badge of being *under the law*, as the Apostle argues, Rom. ii. 26. It was indeed given to Abraham himself as a seal of the righteousness of *the faith* which he had being yet uncircumcised; in other words, a token that God would fulfil the promise, that he should be the *father* or prototype of the faithful, *though they be not circumcised*; but to his posterity, as such, it was at best a token of the covenant of works: of their obligation to fulfil the law perfectly, on pain of being condemned by it; for which reason it was given to Ishmael, without enquiry into his faith and repentance, though he was a youth grown

grown up to maturity, and moreover vicious; and for the same reason administered to all Abraham had any influence over in his family, though adult, and perhaps wicked. As far however as circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, it pre-supposed faith in Abraham; and if baptism be thus denominated, it properly belongs to them only who have faith; for there is not that reason for administering it to slaves, infants, and people in general, though wicked, which made circumcision a duty, it being an ordinance purely evangelical, not a legal appointment which circumcision was. To illustrate the great disparity between the two, let us compare the administration of circumcision, at Shechem Gen. xxxiv. and Gilgal, Josh. v. with that of baptism, Acts ii. The Shechemites were circumcised upon no higher a principle, than that their prince might marry Dinah; at Gilgal, the adult males of Israel were circumcised, without the least personal enquiry, whether they were truly religious or not. But on the day of Pentecost, the converted Jews and Profelytes (you will observe also, notwithstanding they had been *already* circumcised) were baptized, upon a solemn profession of faith and repentance, previously obtained. Do you not plainly perceive the former to be a mere carnal rite, destitute of any analogy to the christian ordinance? Suppose then we follow Mr. H's. jingle from p. 8. that washing with water is a *common* thing—a *cheap* thing—a *plain* thing—an *easy* thing—a *safe* thing—an *expressive* thing, while we smile at his mistake, p. 12. that the being circumcised (not the cruelty of Simeon and Levi) proved fatal to the Shechemites; and equally smile at his *presumption* (built on the *human alteration* of the institution from dipping to sprinkling) that baptism was *designed* for infants, we cannot see how the “main thing” in the ordinance is fulfilled by infant-baptism; Ex. Gr. when he says, p. 13. “The chief thing intended to be signified, is what God doth *for us and upon us*, whence we infer something to be done *by us*,” does it not imply maturity of reason, to
make

make the fact signified appear? You must allow this, or assert that baptism blindly "conveys" salvation, p. 6. When too, he represents it as signifying the blood and grace of Christ, to *seal* pardon and sanctification, the subject of it is presumed to be actually forgiven, and consequently to be a believer, agreeably to the words of Ananias to Saul, *Be baptized and wash thy sins*, or else it seals a mere nullity; for you can bring neither scripture nor good sense, for constituting persons "visible believers," before it is possible they can believe; and cautiously as it is insinuated, that baptism is a seal or token, upon *condition of repentance* (the doctrine of which we shall attend to hereafter) the gospel always speaks of it as following, not preceding repentance; and Mr. H's own reflections in different parts of his book imply as much; tis, says he "*annexed to repentance*," p. 195. Hence, with the scripture, he defines it *the answer of a good conscience*, p. 160. whereby we *profess* a relation to Christ, p. 161. and to *put on* Christ, which is a man's own, his personal and active profession, as he argues, p. 170, not the profession of another for him. Tis an ordinance he further observes, *by and in which we profess to believe, to depend upon, to approve of, to have complacency in, and to oblige ourselves* to comply with the design of the *death* of Christ, to have in baptism fellowship with his sufferings, so as to have "sealed to us, our freedom from the condemning, and commanding power of sin. Tis accordingly stiled, our" dedication "of ourselves to God, p. 42. "our appointment of one head, p. 60. our subscription with our hand, p. 48. 58." our engagement, to wait upon the spirit for our comfort, in his own way, because *we have foolishly sought, and despair to find comfort in the creature*, p. 64. Tis also described, as a "*resignation, and giving ourselves to the Lord; a marriage-covenant, wherein the contract is mutual*, p. 45. a signification of our *explicit consent, the consent of the will, from an assent of the understanding, so as no longer to be our own, but to acknowledge God*

“for our owner.” It is also called, p. 48. 49. a *self-surrender*, whereby we *own* God, p. 50. and *set our seal* that he is true, p. 53. Tis treated therefore as the *promise of all* who are baptized, p. 177. a promise so strictly speaking the person’s own, that to falsify it is to *say and unsay*, p. 158. and not to be *honest*, for “an honest man will be as good as *his word*, p. 159.” Baptism moreover is considered, as an *Oath of allegiance and abjuration*, p. 41. a *military Oath*, p. 162. which *leaving sworn* we must perform; *having vowed* “we must pay, p. 184. having *enlisted ourselves* as soldiers, and “*accepted wages*, we must be good soldiers of Jesus Christ,” and not retract, because such retraction would be a crime equivalent to *perjury*, p. 183, 191. with much more of the kind. Does not the whole consist alone, with a capacity of understanding, adequate to the entrance into these engagements? And if 2 Pet. 1. 9. quoted p. 189. refer more or less to baptism, the phrase *old sins* must imply a capacity of *actual sins*. To apply the foregoing remarks to infants; to speak of infants as “*betimes enlisted* under Christ’s banner; *from the cradle buried* “*with Christ* in baptism; and *thereby engaged*, that sin “*should not have dominion*, &c.” p. 185. is as little to the purpose as it was to say, that the written words put into the dead man’s mouth (in a sense the *last words* in his mouth) were his *last Will and Testament*. That all men are bound to be the Lord’s, by the natural relation they bear to him, is not the point in debate; but whether there lies any additional tie upon the conscience, simply from the circumstance of what a man’s parents pretended to do for him in his infancy? If Mr. H’s reasoning, on the nature of baptism, have any meaning, or consistency, the answer must be, *No!* for it can by no means consist with the baptism of an infant.

The like inference is deducible from his statement, p. 24. of our Lord’s commission, Matt. xxviii. 19. for notwithstanding he insinuates, p. 10. that this command was only “*go and baptize*,” make all you can of *μαρτυρεω*, it will

will not apply to new-born infants: It is derived from *μανθάνω*, to learn. The difference between it and *διδάσχω*, to teach, v. 20. is, that it signifies to *lay the elements* (*στοιχεῖα*, rudiments, p. 56.) whereas the latter is to *further* the improvement in learning, tho' Matt. xiii. 52. carries the former word much beyond this explanation. The texts referred to are unanimous, that the consent of the person is necessary, to constitute him a disciple of Christ, as Mr. H. says, *Joseph of Arimathea* "was one, who had given himself up to be a disciple" I heartily pity that hard-driven criticism, p. 11. which so obstinately persists, that "to baptize is the mode of executing the command to disciple." John iv. i. *Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*, directly confronts it, that *making* the disciples was quite a distinct matter, and *previous* to the *baptizing* them. The words also, put into the mouth of the Jewish Proselyte, *Profelytum me fac, Make me a Proselyte*, express a *desire* to learn. As to those who "will have none baptized," "till they are *thoroughly learned*." I do not know them, nor can you point them out; yet upon these flimsy principles Mr. H. maintains, that to *disciple* and to *baptize* are one and the same act. He explains the command accordingly, p. 25. "christianize all nations, &c." And let us now see the absurdity of the interpretation. You will suffer me to lay down an obvious preliminary, *That there is but one direction given here, respecting all the persons to be baptized*. Now, applying this rule to the baptism of infants, the text according to Mr. H. must run thus, "Go and disciple them by baptism. without previous teaching." But what, Sir, does it direct in the case of adult persons? To disciple them also by baptism, without previous instruction? "No," you will say. "They were first to be taught then baptized." But this is a concession that *μαθησέω* signifies to *teach*, and makes two particular rules, where your Matter gives one universal rule. You make him say what he does not, "Teach adult persons, and baptize them; but baptize infants with-

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“out teaching.” In short if the commission ordain, that the instruction of adult persons should precede their baptism, (as it is explained Mark xvi. 16.) then it excludes all who have not a degree of instruction; or if it mean, *Disciple by baptism* without previous instruction, then it enjoins, not only to baptize infants but persons grown-up, in this uninstructed manner; for there is no alternative. And will you abide by this last consequence? Dr. Ridgley was so perswaded of the weakness of attempting to prove infant-baptism from this text, that he publickly disavowed it, in his *Body of Divinity*, Quest. 166. But let the commission stand, as it properly does in our Bible, and we can readily see who, and who only, ought to be admitted into the visible church, “those who are *willing*, says “Mr. H.” all who profess faith “in Christ, and obedience to him;” p. 25. 26. Only such are “visible believers,” or have a title to the privileges, and communion of the church of Christ.

Much error has been propagated, by the use of phrases unmeaning or equivocal. *A seal of the covenant of grace* is one of these phrases. A seal affixed to a deed or covenant, is that which ratifies the agreement. The covenant of grace is God’s determination and engagement in his Son, to save sinners; and I know of no seal, or ratification any man can have, of God’s determination to save him in particular, but the blood of Christ applied, for the peace of his mind, by the spirit of promise. Baptism has no claim to this term, unless it can be made out, that it conveys or confirms the grant of salvation to the person baptized. But though this is covertly insinuated in several places, and is also expatiated upon, as if the offspring of believers are, in the most absolute sense, joint-heirs with their parents of the distinguishing blessings of the covenant of grace; p. 34. the matter is put upon a different footing; that baptism belongs not to the *internal*, but *external*, administration of the covenant; understanding by the latter, the revealed will of God to mankind. Now here a question might be proposed, whether, by the

the divine appointment, any have a right to the external ordinance of baptism, who are not already possessed of the internal administration of the covenant? The Jewish polity, we shall see, was of a very different construction from the christian church, and not intended to be a pattern for it. Mr. *H* also, p. 68. supposes more accurately, that the chearful submission of the first christian converts to the ordinance, and that in the face of their countrymen, who had just crucified Christ, was a good implicit evidence of their inward religion, than that it was the practice of the Apostles, and is the duty of succeeding ministers, to baptize all that offer, provided they make something of a superficial profession of faith. Had this been the case, 'tis wonderful they were not mistaken in more, than Simon Magus, and the very few that turned out different from expectation. However if baptism be any kind of profession, the person must be adult to make it. If it be a *seal* in Mr. *H*'s own sense, p. 35. i. e. " a mutual assurance of the sincerity of the covenanters," a new-born infant cannot be a party in such a covenant. Or if there be any parallel, between the engagements entered into by baptism, and the covenanting sign, Exod. xxi. 6. wherein a servant's ear was bored, in token of his binding himself to his master for ever, p. 36. Still the act of surrender must be voluntary, as that was. Mr. *H*. further admits, p. 38. that we must have our *consciences purged from dead works*, before we can acceptably *serve the living God*; and why not in the duty of baptism? for I cannot see how in baptism God " marks persons " for salvation", and gives them a token, that *he will be their God, and they shall be his people* (which is an absolute and unconditional promise) without their being so far adult, as to understand and exercise true religion; at least, not without maintaining, that God is absolutely the God of every one baptized; for such he is presumed to be of all, who are baptized upon a profession of having experienced his effectual grace. The farther I advance into the subsequent part of Mr. *H*'s reflections on this head, the

the more inapplicable, I am convinced, baptism is to any other than professing believers. How else can it be submitted to, "in token of our believing in God the Father, " Son, and Holy Ghost," as the Israelites were baptized *εις Μωσυν*, in token of having *believed in Moses*, at the red-sea? p. 40. The Apostle does not intimate to us, 1 Cor. x. ii. that the passage of their infants was considered as such a baptism (any more than the passage of their Oxen, Asses and household-stuff) but the *fathers*, who were at age to signify their "*assent, and consent*" How else, let me add, can baptism declare our "throwing off the devil's yoke." p. 42. "disclaiming conformity to this present world, p. 44. resignation of our *whole selves*, body, soul and spirit, to the Lord, in respect of "duty, and dependance; and our regard for the *Sacred Three*?" p. 46. 47. If parents enter their children at school, "before they are able to chuse for themselves," p. 56. they do not send them to school before they are capable of being taught; and God makes his children *willing* Ps. cx. iii. when he admits them into his school. But I am surprized Mr *H's* accommodating temper, did not also bring the sending children to *wet-nurse*, as an argument for baptizing them. We do not "reproach our master," by saying that "he will not teach little ones;" nor deny, that he can "early instil his instructions into the soul," We only contend that, as all little ones are not taught by him. baptism ought to be deferred, till any appear to have had his teaching. The Baptists do not think, that baptism is the *entrance* into the school of Christ, but a publick declaration, that the subject of it *has entered*. Neither are they so vain as to imagine it in their power, to enter their children into Christ's school. They express their prayers that they may be entered there; and if the Pedobaptists mean more than prayer, 'tis an infringement on Christ's own prerogative, whose province alone it is, to enter scholars into his school; and no wonder he frowns upon the pretension; and experience proves it to be a very unsuccessful, because
inadequate

inadequate method of realizing disciples of Christ, extending his kingdom in the world, and filling up the vacant places in the church-militant. Mr. H. p. 154. laments it as a "sin and a shame, that many who have been baptized and are called Christians, know little of the doctrine of Christ." The cause, however, of the phenomenon is obvious. How can it be otherwise, when people are possessed of the notion, that they were made christians and baptized, before they were capable of being taught? Would this complaint exist, were they, as directed by scripture, first of all *taught*, then *baptized*? This is the alone cure for the present melancholy prevalence of ignorance, under cover of the name of Christ; and is an additional reason, for the incompatibility of infant-baptism with the *nature and design of baptism*. Let the ordinance be well understood, and regarded according to the *primitive pattern*, and mean as it may seem "in the eyes of carnal people," p. 65. it will appear great and glorious to the spiritually-minded. But it is not to infant-sprinkling that we must look, for an institution despised by carnal people. It is the idol which they worship. The baptism of believers, to be sure they despise; and there is a very competent reason to be given for their contempt, that *All men have not faith*. I am Sir, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Infant-baptism inconsistent with scripture.

Rev. SIR,

"H A V I N G opened at large the *nature of baptism*," and the *inconsistency of infant baptism* therewith, we readily agree with Mr. H. in the "general rules" he lays

down; that our Master hath directed us, "to baptize all nations;" and that we must "proceed by a judgment of charity upon a *plausible profession*," provided the person making that profession be ready to give a *reason* of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear 1 Pet. iii. 15. We have no dispute with the Author then, that "Heathens, Jews, Turks," yea all who *seriously* profess faith in Christ and obedience to him, are to be baptized; tho' we admire how it comes to pass, if circumcision were a seal of the covenant of grace, and the Jews, being circumcised, were, according to Mr. H. sealed in that covenant before, p. 91. and their females baptized, as he asserts p. 2. that these Jews, upon being converted to christianity, must be baptized. Does it not put them upon that level with heathens, and gentile sinners, he is so afraid of? If too, circumcision were tantamount to baptism, is not a repetition of the seal unnecessary, and a species of Anabaptism? I submit these ideas to consideration and proceed. When a man has a particular point at heart, the predilections of his own mind furnish him with plausible arguments, which being satisfactory to himself, he is amazed are not so to other people. The absurdities of Popery have each its specific reasons, which, Mr. H. well observes, p. 153. "have pleaded a great deal of decency and significancy," therein; and in our day, the unclean doctrine of Polygamy has stretched its reasons (more particularly from the Old Testament also) through three octavo volumes. No wonder then that infant-baptism, being fondly embraced, has its ostensible reasons. We too have our reasons, for doubting of the propriety of the practice; one of which, by the way, Mr. H. has helped us to p. 67. the very same that excites his abhorrence of the compulsive methods the Spaniards took, in converting and baptizing the Indians; "Christ will have *all* his subjects *willing* in the day of his power." Infant-baptism impresses men, without consulting their reason, and against their will, as their behaviour, when capable of choice, testifies. Will it be maintained, that it is only to what was antecedently

antecedently their duty? The same argument would justify the *Spanish* compulsion of the Indians, to what was as much their duty; and a vast deal might be urged about their obstinacy, and a strong desire of the salvation of their souls, in apology for chastening their bodies, to bring them to baptism. But after all the chief question is, what ground has infant-baptism in the word of God? And had Mr. H. brought us *one* good proof, of its being "a truth *once* delivered to the saints," and the *good old way*, ‡ he might have spared all his unnecessary remarks. This, the most important part, however, he professes to "*tread lightly*," "because, he tells us, so much has been said and written, and so learnedly," and *unanswered* withal, even in his day, that to be large would

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‡ The mention of this text reminds me of an anecdote which I had from persons of undoubted veracity; that the Rev. JOHN EVANS, father of Dr. JOHN EVANS (author of the CHRISTIAN TEMPER) mentioned in the NONCONFORMIST'S MEMORIAL. v. II. p. 645. as Pastor of a Church at WREXHAM in DENBIGHSHIRE, interrogating one of his members, How she become a Baptist? The good woman answered, that he had convinced her of the duty. Being asked, How? She reminded him that preaching sometime before on this text, he proposed to point out some of the distinguishing marks of the GOOD OLD WAY; and the very first mark specified was, That Christ and his Apostles were at the head of this way; upon which she concluded, that she must not look to MOSES, but to CHRIST and his Apostles, for Christian-ordinances; and she could not find infant-baptism in their precepts or practice; which just observation contributed, with other considerations, to raise those scruples in the good man's mind, that he disused infant-baptism, or what is called so, for several years before his weakness of body laid him aside from the exercise of his ministry.---I beg leave to add here a remark, on an hint suggested in the work before referred to p. 617. that some persons acknowledged to Mr. HUGH OWEN, that disputes about baptism in WREXHAM, had made a great breach, dishonoured God, occasioned the contempt of religion, and the loss of the presence of God, and put a Stop to the work of conversion. I am authorized to contradict this account; and to declare, that whatever bad tempers, towards the Baptists, any individuals have lamented, God has not been dishonoured nor his presence lost, nor the work of conversion stopped in that Church; nor has religion been exposed to contempt, any otherwise than that they who make Christ their pattern, and do not conform to this world, will, like their Lord was, be despised by the world; neither has there ever been any breach, on account of baptism of any other account whatsoever, except the departure of three or four; or half a dozen people (of no consideration except for their ill-nature) might be termed a great breach.

would be "lost labour." Pity but he had pointed out to us these elaborate and unanswered treatises; because I never saw them; except this be the view of their *unanswerableness*, that when a sufficient reply is given, it is the custom not to take the least notice of that reply, but, after some time, to issue out the very same arguments again, as if no answer had been given them. Mr. H's cause also wears but a very indifferent aspect, that he is obliged to introduce his arguments with railing. Sound reasoning does not need such props. Not to say, that the enormities at Munster have been malevolently exaggerated, beyond all reason and truth; and that the riots of an inconsiderable rabble there, are no more chargeable on the general body of Baptists, than the late riots in the City of *London*, are chargeable on the general body of English Protestants, it is with an ill-grace that we are so peevishly twitted, with the iniquities of that short-lived faction, whilst the Papists, and other Pedobaptists, have been guilty of ten thousand times greater cruelties; and whilst this story, and this *only*, is so frequently thrown out as dishonourable to them, the Baptists are comforted with the reflection, that when their enemies have said this, they have nothing more to reproach them with; and that it would have been equally ridiculous to say, that the Apostles of Christ were traitors to their Lord, because Judas, one of them, betrayed him. It discovers ignorance or malice also to assert, that "the greater part of the Baptists, in our day, run into extremes directly opposite to each other, and equally distant from the truth as it is in Jesus," alledging the denial of infant-baptism as the cause. Are they more distant from the truth than the Pedobaptists? How many of the latter zealously deny the plenary inspiration of scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity almost the whole of divine influence, the atonement of Christ, the immateriality of the soul, the real criminality of mens actions, and the nature and duration of future punishments! Do the Baptist run into extremes
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more dangerous? And what if I were to impute them to the probable influence of infant-baptism? I am sure I should have better reasons on my side: for instance, when the venerable names of Father, Son and Holy-Ghost are used, in so trifling a manner as is generally practised, is it a wonder that the doctrine of the blessed Trinity is so little set by? As for the unconditionality of the gospel-covenant, for which we are censured; to ascribe *too much* glory to God, in the matter of salvation, were the charge true, I confess is not in common a Pedo-baptist-error. Even Mr. *H.* who speaks of God as a free-agent, in dispensing his own grace, of the *election of grace*, p. 62. and that of *his own free-will* God begets with the word of truth, p. 126 (language unconditional, which also all of you adopt *in prayer*) and though some good people have rather too hastily valued him, as an evangelical expofitor, which you bless God for; yet from the whole drift of this book, and his uniform professions of conditionality, is plainly of that *double-faced* system *Baxterianism*. The *Two-faced Janus*, amongst the Romans, might be a natural emblem of war, because descriptive of that duplicity, and those stratagems, which are thought lawful and necessary to deceive an enemy; but it is so incongruous to the religion of Jesus, that, in the present case, the Apostle Paul positively declares against such an incoherent mixture, of divine grace and human conditions. *If by grace, then it is no more of works. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.* Rom. xi. 6. If also the Baptists are *too thankful* to God, tis the more pardonable, because in truth, seeing nothing in themselves to build upon, as a *condition* of obtaining the divine favour, were not God's covenant unconditional, and their salvation entirely of his own grace, they would for ever despair. And this sentiment about free-grace is one very substantial reason, why they do not acknowledge infant-baptism; because they pretend not to stipulate with God for their children, or fancy them *his*, and
entitled

entitled to gospel privileges, *by descent from them*, p. 223. They think the opinion derogates from the honour, and destroys the *freeness* of grace. As another of the extremes this people run into, why did not the Author mention, that they are very strict in their examination of persons, previously to their admission to church-membership, and this also because they believe free-grace, and that no one is, by nature or descent, better or more privileged, than another? Why did he not also accuse them of too great rigidity, in their attention to the morals and spirituality of their members? I fear we should have found it difficult to obtain evidence, for retorting the charge generally, upon Mr. H's denomination. I leave the epithets of *unnatural* and *uncharitable*, with only observing here, that we deny our children no spiritual privileges, which the seed of believers, as such, *ever had*. A short remark will suffice also for the nick-name *Ana-baptists*, so good-naturedly thrown out against us, p. 70. Deficient as infant-sprinkling is in defending itself, this title given to its opposers, is a mere *begging of the question*, and greatly resembles Lord Peter's method of proving his *brown-loaf*, to be *fish, flesh, and fowl*. 'Tis a poor cause that requires opprobrious names to keep it in countenance. Bishop Burnet, Dr. Doddridge and others allow, that Paul did baptize some, even adult persons, who had received what they thought baptism before, because it was received in a blind, uninstructed and ignorant manner; Acts xix 5. much more then would the Apostle have deemed infant-sprinkling, to be of no validity.

In stating the *grounds* of infant-baptism, p. 72. I observe, that if the principles upon which it is judged defensible, were *practically* adhered to, they would confine the administration to about a *quarter*, or *one third* of those to whom it is now professedly given. Mr. H admits, that "if the parents are profane and scandalous, or deny the fundamental articles of the christian religion, or refuse to consent to the covenant of grace," (as all unregenerate men, moral and immoral do) their children
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“ are not to be baptized.” If then the Pedobaptist-ministers were consistent, the number admitted would be comparatively small. Whereas now generally, both in the Church of *England* and amongst Dissenters, all the children presented are sprinkled, let the parents be what they may; yea, even base-born children. And indeed if it be the child’s privilege or benefit, I do not see why the parent’s fault should be an impediment; “ for (as Arch. Leighton well argues on this point *Letter, 1 Select Works*, p. 548) “ that it is the parent’s faith gives the child a “ right to it, is neither clear from scripture, nor any “ found reason.” Mr. H. however is positive, that “ a “ plausible profession, not contradicted by evident ignorance or wickedness,” p. 76. is necessary to make good the child’s title; and thereby lays himself open to a like charge he exhibits against the Baptists; for he supposes the children to be partakers of their parent’s corruptions, and cuts them off from the privileges he annexes to baptism. Nay, so cruel is he to the children of irreligious parents, for no fault of their own, that he denies them the aid of their charitable neighbours, who, by standing *Sponsors*, might make them *members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven*. And all those who have the unhappiness (as *most* children certainly have) to be the off-spring of unconverted people, he would, full as much as *he says* the Baptists do, leave “ in the “ kingdom of darkness;” deliver over to “ satan, as “ members of his visible kingdom;” and bid, “ Go and “ serve other Gods,” p. 106. for he insists, that they have no right to baptism; and accordingly puts parents, p. 223 upon examining themselves, what *title* their children have *by descent*; because their children cannot have higher or greater privileges than themselves, as the streams cannot rise higher than the spring; and that if the church be imposed on, God is not mocked &c. q. d. “ Should “ the child of an unbeliever, in a surreptitious manner, “ creep into the covenant, and obtain the seal thereof, “ such baptism is not valid, because the child had no
“ right

“ *right to it.*” I would willingly then have entertained an hope, that Mr. *H.* did not account the adult baptism of these innocent impostors, to be Anabaptism, but that unluckily I recollected, in Dr. *Calamy’s life and times of Mr. Baxter*, p. 513. that Mr. *Davies*, of *Rothwell*, in *Northamptonshire*, did reckon such ^{adult} baptism to be null “ *and void;*” for which offence those called the “ *United Ministers,*” (out of *zeal for the truth of Christ,*” no doubt) did enter a public and bitter protest against him, as a *fool*, and as guilty of *rebaptizing*. But he acted more consistently with his principles than those, who first of all profess, that the infants of believers *alone* are entitled to baptism, and then give their public sanction to that of the seed of unbelievers. I confess I am not satisfied with Mr. *H.’s* plausible representation, of the office of *Godfathers* or *Sponsors*. History is very clear, that they not only attested the faith of adult persons, but actually answered instead of infants, that they *believed*, and *desired* to be baptized; a practice too, that being coeval with infant-baptism, will point to us its true origin. Baptism was held to be necessary to salvation. A previous confession was necessary to baptism. The infant could not make the indispensable confession. Consequently another answered for him. And it is so used universally, wherever sponsors have kept their footing. But leaving this, Mr. *H.* having first charged the Baptists, with limiting the privileges of the covenant, and then fallen into the supposed error himself, thinks he has infant-baptism at last, upon its right basis. Here then we are presented with *six arguments*, including many subordinate ones, in all which he has certainly said curious things though nothing new or unanswered. For instance on the *First*, “ That the infants of believing parents are in covenant with God, “ and therefore have a right to the initiating seal,” he tells us, It is *possible* they may be—it is *probable* they should be—it is *certain* they were—it is *certain* therefore they are, in this covenant; but I am ready to think he was not quite positive of the two last particulars; because
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it is impertinent, to bring *possibility* and *probability* to the aid of *certainty*. I observe too, that were infants, in the highest sense he can suppose, in covenant with God, without express authority, he has no right to administer any ordinance by way of *seal* to that covenant. The seed of believers before Abraham, and many of his pious cotemporaries (such as *Job*, *Lot*, *Melchisedec* &c.) had none; the female seed even of Abraham had none; and unless Mr. H. bring clear and express warrant for administering baptism, his *consequent* (notwithstanding all his *possibilities*, *probabilities*, and fancied analogies) will sink in the eyes of an unprejudiced person, who is conscious how full of deception implicit deductions often are; and who remembers it is written, *Add not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*, Prov. xxx. 6. Tis true, "the crown may devolve upon an infant," p. 80. But will you say, that the ceremony, of coronation would be wisely performed upon him, before it can be known, whether he is a rational man or an idiot? An infant *may* be an object of God's special love; but as that cannot be ascertained but by years, tis best to wait till that time to administer the tokens of that love. If Mr. H. be right, that in baptism and the Lord's supper, "though the thing signified be the same, the *manner of signification is different*." (implying also a variation, in the subjects of the two ordinances) why, supposing circumcision and baptism to have the same meaning, may not the same variation in the subjects take place? If the Jewish infants were circumcised, it appears also from Exod. xii. 26. that they eat the passover, peremptory as is Mr. H's. assertion to the contrary.—But I deny his *Antecedent*, that the children of believers, *as such*, are in a spiritual sense in covenant with God, or more entitled to the privileges and blessings of his covenant, than the seed of heathens, or unbelievers; and in order to shew the fallacy of his reasoning (1^o on the *possibility* of his notion, it is proper to remark, that, p. 33 he maintained the covenant of grace to be published *conditionally*, implying

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restipulation on the creature's part. But as it occurred that an infant cannot restipulate, we are presented, p. 82. with two instances of covenants, made without restipulation. It happens however, that both these are *unconditional* covenants, i. e. *promises* made to the earth, that God would not again overflow it, and his special engagement concerning his chosen, Heb. viii. 10. *I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, &c.* These two *unconditional* proofs are brought to support the *conditional* covenant, he asserts infants to be in. Aware however of some inconsistency, immediately he shifts the point in debate, and reminds us, that “*διαθήκη* signifies as well a *testament*,” and that infants “may have benefit by a *testament*.” But this evasion makes nothing for him; for either the legacy is conditional or unconditional; if the latter, then the seed of believers, *as such*, are irrevocably entitled to salvation; if the former, then there must be a restipulation, which in infancy is impossible; or if, as he says, p. 94. it be suspended upon a condition to be performed in future, “so that if they pay the rent, and do the service, they shall share the benefits of it;” though it is an odd way of talking, in a Divine of Mr. H's. reputed orthodoxy, and in fact implies an impossibility of salvation, yet it does not favour his idea, of the superior title of a believer's seed to the blessings of God's covenant; for the children of an unbeliever have as good a title to salvation, *if they believe*, as those of a believer; nay, as much may be said of the most abandoned sinners, and of the savage Indians; but that, as Mr. H. allows, is no reason for baptizing them, *until they believe*. From hence then it follows, either that the children of believers are put, by the faith of their parents, unalterably into the covenant of grace, or else that baptism ought to be administered, to the infants of all men, whether believers or not. If the former of these alternatives be denied, Mr. H's argument, that because a believer's seed *possibly may be*, therefore they *actually are* in covenant with God, falls of course.—Methinks also he sus-

pects its instability, by suggesting, as a support to it, a remark, that " children have been sanctified from the womb, and that John the Baptist was *filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.*" But what then? Was he thus sanctified in virtue of his parents being believers? Or was it not rather, for the particular purposes for which he was sent into the world? May not the child of an unbeliever *possibly* be sanctified from the womb? And are not the offspring of believers often unsanctified, living and dying? " How then shall we distinguish between those who are, and those who are not sanctified? Are we to conclude *generally*, that a believer's children are in the covenant of grace, and baptize them upon a mere peradventure, because a very few have been sanctified from the womb? But says Mr. H.

2. " It is highly *probable*, that the children of believers " should be in covenant with God. " And here he falls into similar inconsistencies; as. (1) That " infants are " parts of their parents. " True, they spring from them. But spiritual benefits are not conferred by such a relation. They are *not of flesh, nor of blood*, John 1. 13. But children " are said to be *in the loins of their parents*, Heb. vii. 10. and in them to act and receive. " That is, when Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedec. Gen. xiv. 20. Levi unborn paid tithes in Abraham. But if this example had any weight, it would destroy baptism altogether. For the parallel must run thus;

When Abraham paid tithes, Levi, his great Grand-son, being in his loins, *Virtually* paid tithes.

When a man therefore is baptized, all his posterity, in his loins, are *Virtually* baptized.

The conclusion is, that the descendants of baptized persons are *not to be* baptized. Mr. Wakefield, and the whole denomination of *Quakers*, would be glad of this parallel. But where the argument for infant-baptism is, I cannot discern; nor how, because parents ought to give up their children to God in prayer, therefore they are bound to do it in baptism, or more in baptism

than the Lord's supper. But (2) Mr. *H.* tell us, "All other covenants which God made with men, have taken in the seed of the covenanters." And here he very plainly insinuates, that according to the covenant of grace, the salvation of children is to stand or fall by that of their parents, as the covenant of works included Adam and his posterity. My Bible teaches me to draw a parallel between Adam and Christ, as the representatives of their respective seeds; but not between Adam and believing parents.—The covenant with Noah we have already seen was no other than a *promise*, no more to cut off all flesh, and the reference to it in Is. lvi 9. relates only to the *establishment* of the covenant of grace to the church of Christ, not that the infants of believers, as such, are included in that covenant.—To make a covenant also, sometimes signifies to *issue a command*, as *Witsius*, on the *Covenants* Book 1. chap. I. iii. will inform you. Hence the *Decalogue*, or ten commandments, is called a covenant, Ex. xxxiv. 28. and this is exactly the meaning of the word in Deut xxix. 11. It could not be a "type of the covenant of *grace*," as it was merely a publication of the law, on which account it was binding on the strangers as much as Israelites; on persons absent, as well as those present, v. 15.—The promise also, Gal. iii. 17 was not made to the natural seed of believers as such, but to Christ and his Church, in a spiritual sense, as is expressly declared, v. 16.—But it seems, there was a grant by Covenant, of priesthood to Phinehas and his family, and of royalty to David and his family; from whence it is argued, that the children of believers are probably in the covenant of grace with their parents. But is it not equally futile as to assert, because some pensions take in a man and all his family, therefore all do? The Author's allusion to the covenant with David, likewise, is remarkably unfortunate. *All* of David's family were not to be kings, as it is contended that *all* the seed of believers are in the better covenant. Unhappily he has adduced

adduced a case, in which a covenant with the parent, *does not* include all his seed, but merely a particular line; the most *probable* inference from which is, that all the seed of believers are *not* to be baptized, but only particular persons; and we allow, all that believe may. As to the concluding hint, that "Christians are kings and priests unto God," tis so similar to the method taken, by the venerable St. *Epiphanius*. to prove our Lord's mother *always a virgin*, (because our Lord is called a *Lion* that therefore his mother was a *Lioness*, and a *Lioness* can have but one conception, &c) that I am surprized you did not see the absurdity, of drawing literal conclusions from figurative premises.—Willing however to scrape together, all the *probabilities* he can put any face upon, Mr. *H.* (3) Shifts his ground, and leads us to the kindness God hath, on some (not all) occasions, expressed for certain little children. But how did his sparing the children of Nineveh, *Jonah* iv. 11. discover his regard for them in a spiritual sense; or his destruction of the children of Sodom and Gomorrah, discover his spiritual hatred of them? And what has this to do with the children of believers being, in right of their parents, in covenant with God? Were not the Ninevites unbelievers? Will you be so kind as to inform us also, whether it was a mark of love or hatred, when the *circumcised little children* of *Dathan* and *Abiram* (who, according to Mr. *H.* were "visible believers," "engrafted into Christ," and sealed in the covenant of Grace, yet) *all went down alive into the pit*, with their parents whom the earth swallowed up, *Num.* xvi? The other instance is more to the purpose, and will be considered hereafter. Suffice it now to observe, that if Jesus *blessed*, he did not *baptize* infants. So ill-founded are Mr. *H.*'s probabilities; though were they well-founded, a million of them would not amount to one proof, which a man that examines for himself could depend upon. Let us proceed then,

3. To his *certainty*. Tis certain, he says, " children were in covenant ;" and hard is he put to it to make out some small intimation, that in the primitive ages of the world, the children of the godly were, on their parents account, considered as in the covenant of grace. But he is obliged to confess, " It doth not very evidently appear ;" and, in fact, it doth not appear *at all*. But if so necessary, why not appear at that time? Why was not some such sign affixed to Adam and to Seth, to Enoch and to Noah, as it is insisted circumcision was afterwards? The Jews, soon after the promulgation of christianity, set up this idea of circumcision, to oppose it to the humbling scheme of the gospel, and were answered exactly in these words, by *Justin Martyr*, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, about 140 years after Christ. The Sabbath was necessary, and we have plain intimation of it. The promise of the Saviour was necessary, and it was given. And if the faith of believing parents initiated their children into the covenant of grace, was not that of sufficient importance to be plainly told, and not left to such improbable hints, as Mr. *H*. has brought together. If the Godly, finding their admonitions abroad ineffectual, at least endeavoured to keep up the decent "*face of religion*," in their own families ; did they therefore consider their children, as actually in the covenant of grace, and pretend to seal them there? " In the patriarchal ages, " professors were called *Sons of God*, Gen. vi. 2. but " not *as*, or because they were the posterity of *Seth*. In that case *Cain*, being the son of *Adam*, and Adam a believer, was also a *Son of God*, and both he and his posterity, of course, in the covenant of grace, like as Mr. *H*. maintains all the posterity of Abraham, good and wicked alike, have been, by virtue of his faith. The truth is, men were not called Sons of God, till they began to *call upon the name of the Lord*, Gen. iv. 26. The longevity of Adam, Seth and Enos, enabled them to see many of their posterity, grown up to maturity. And not only, did the really godly amongst them worship God in the truth, but the

the influence and examples of their pious fathers, for a considerable time overawed the rest, that, at least, they carried upon them the form of godliness. They were therefore called the Sons of God, because they professed so to be. That profession was apparently voluntary, however really constrained, as the event manifested. What is there in all this, of the parents supposing their children to be *holy by descent*, p. 226. and in the covenant, before they could give any evidences of their piety? In no other sense was “the profession of religion *entailed* upon families,” as far as we have any documents from history, than that good men endeavoured to instil principles of truth, into the minds of their descendants. Failing hitherto then, Mr. H. in common with others of his sentiments, flies eagerly to the Abrahamic-covenant, to prove the seed of believers, as such, to be in the covenant of grace. It will be proper therefore, to state that matter briefly, before we proceed further. We do not deny that there was a sense, in which the seed of Abraham, after the flesh, was in covenant with God. Yet *not all* the posterity of Abraham. Ishmael was his Son, but not included in the promised seed; for it was said, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xvii. 20. Nor was Esau, Isaac’s eldest son, in it; for the promise ran in the line of Jacob; and that not on account of Esau’s profane rejection of his birth-right; but from the sovereign appointment of God, before the children were born, or had done good or evil, Rom. ix. ii. I mention these things to remind you, that it was not merely the being born of Abraham, or the being circumcised, that gave interest in the Abrahamic-covenant: So that here, to go no further, the proof fails, that the children of believing parents, *as such* (i. e. *of course*) are in the covenant of grace, or, in any sense at all, in covenant with God; for Ishmael and Esau were both children of eminent believers, and moreover circumcised, without the smallest hint that they were sealed in covenant; nay, Mr. H. allows, p. 241, and 267. that “the covenant or adoption was not established
“ with

“ with Ishmael,” but only with “ Isaac.” Yet there is a great and glorious meaning in the promises, Gen xii. 3. *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed,* and Gen. xvii 7. *I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee.* The former text speaks of the coming of Christ of Abraham’s seed; from whence Peter calls the Jews, *the children of the covenant God made with their fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed,* Acts iii. 25. by which he certainly meant no more, then that they were the children of those to whom the promise was made; not that, because they were the natural seed of Abraham, they had a special interest in the blessings of the covenant. The Apostle Paul expressly referring to this *first* promise Gal. iii. 17. (as will appear from tracing the 430 years, v. 18. which can only consist with this date,) tells us, it was not made to the Jews *as such*, but had a spiritual meaning; *not to seeds as of many, but as of one, to thy seed, which is Christ*; for whether it relate to Christ personally, or to him and his church, it must be understood spiritually, and cannot be extended to the whole natural posterity of Abraham. The other promise, Gen. xvii. 7. involves this. “ It contains a renewal of the “ promise to Abraham, which seems to have been necessary, before the establishing of the covenant with “ him for his natural offspring, that it might appear “ the former grant was not disannulled by it; but that “ the latter was to subserve the ends of the former. But “ our present enquiry is, of what nature the covenant “ is, that God established with Abraham, v. 7. 8. 9. to “ the 14th. And in order hereunto we must consider, “ who are this seed of Abraham, with whom it is “ made.” One view was, that Abraham should be the *Father* of all true believers, who are said to be his *seed*, and *children by faith*. Gal. iii. 7. and to whom the promise, *I will be the God of thy seed*, belongs in the highest sense; the Apostle plainly distinguishes between these and Abraham’s natural seed, *as such*, Rom. ix. 8.

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They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise, to whom spiritual promises were alone made, are counted for the seed. The other view was peculiar to Abraham's *natural posterity*, and in this respect the promise, *I will be a God to thee, and thy seed after thee*, was not made in a spiritual sense; but ran, as explained, v. 8. *I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God*; that is, in a national and worldly manner more especially, though the *everlasting possession* spoken of could not mean unlimited duration. This sense is clear, if the whole passage be brought forward (as it seldom is) in the debate; this is the interpretation also alluded to, Deut. xxix. which you quote from Mr. Towgood, p. 85, and it is further confirmed by the explanation God gives of it, Jer. xi. 5. *The oath which I have sworn unto your Fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.* These two views of the Abrahamic-covenant being so plain, ought to be kept cautiously *distinct*. But it has been the misfortune of Pedobaptist writers, to confound them together. Thus they have argued the *natural* and the *spiritual*, to be one and the same seed; or that the natural is so inseparably connected with the spiritual, as to come in for a share, of the privileges peculiar to the latter; though the scripture always considers them as wholly separate; and that the natural seed of Abraham partook no further, of the peculiar blessings of God's covenant, than as they were also his spiritual seed, i. e. possessed his faith, Gal. iii. 9. Now to the natural seed alone, *as such*, was circumcision commanded; which Mr. H. being so strenuous about, as the ground of infant-baptism, I shall here point out the absolute dissimilitude of, even to his own idea of baptism. The command of circumcision extended to all Abraham's natural seed, without exception against, or respect unto their piety. It did not matter, whether the immediate parents were, or were not

not godly. If all his ancestors, to the fortieth generation, had been children of Belial, yet the infant, being a descendant of Abraham, must be circumcised. What likeness is there in this, to the supposed right of infants to baptism, which right Mr. H. says is not promiscuous, and does not arise from the faith of any remote ancestor (such as Abraham was to the Jewish-infants) but requires, p. 76. that one of the *immediate* parents actually believe? If circumcision be an argument for baptism, then it is not necessary, that the parents of the child believe. They may be avowed unbelievers, or grossly "profane and scandalous;" but if any ancestor can be traced, *a thousand years* back, who had faith, that faith would entitle the child to the covenant of grace, notwithstanding Mr. H. deprecates the thought of "*taking such children into the church*," p. 73. Yet this is not the whole. Not all even of the descendants of Abraham were circumcised. The *females* had neither circumcision, nor any mark of like signification. So that either it was no seal of the covenant of grace, or about *half* of the nation was not sealed therein. Either there is no analogy between circumcision and baptism, or females ought not to be baptized. These hints therefore might suffice to disprove the notion, as built upon fancy, and strained to serve a purpose. But let us read Mr. H's. arguments. He tells us, p. 85. That the off-spring of believers, as such, "were reckoned amongst those *to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the promises.*" What are we to understand by this insinuation, but that where the parents believed, the children were also considered as believers, without any distinction between godly and ungodly? But the words are spoken of the children of Israel alone, who had the *adoption*, not as the *spiritual* people of God, *for they were not all Israel that were of Israel*; but as they were, in a national sense, distinguished by many outward blessings, which other nations had not. They also had, no doubt, the custody of the oracles of God, until the open promulgation of the gospel to
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the world, and subservient to that design. In this sense they had the *glory* of the ark Ps. Lxxviii. 61. and the *covenants* aforesaid, and *the giving of the law* (which Mr. H. has kept out of sight, lest their privileges should appear *legal* rather than *evangelical*) and the *promises*, which were held out in the word to them, and conveyed to posterity by them. After all that is said of their privileges by the Apostle, he declares the amount of the whole, Rom. iii. 2. to be *chiefly*, that to them were committed the oracles of God. This, their *chief* privilege, the Lord favoured them with, for Abraham's sake; but not, *for his sake*, with greater *interest* in the promises than others, though they might be better acquainted with them; neither was it necessary, that the immediate parents should be real believers, in order that these privileges might pertain to the children; but all the nation of Israel, without exception, had them, and the women without circumcision, or any similar ceremony. A poor argument that the seed of believers, as such, are in the covenant of grace. Abraham's natural seed, as such, were not. It is granted however, that they had the true worship of God, in the confined sense in which it was then administered; that they were a kind of national-establishment of religion; and they, moreover, had certain rites which the Apostle calls *carnal ordinances imposed on them*, Heb. ix. 10. because pertaining *chiefly* to outward regularity. Amongst these was circumcision; and the view of that dispensation seems to have been, to manifest how far a ceremonial-establishment would go, in restraining men from sin; or rather, to prove its insufficiency, for the purposes of religion. The *new covenant* of the gospel, therefore, is a constitution quite of a different nature. "Our Great Master, says Mr. H. p. 11. came to abolish the law of commandments, and to introduce a *spiritual worship*." Its distinguishing ordinances are spiritual; and none but those who are presumed to be such, ought to partake of them. Will you assert, that the church

of Christ is a national-hierarchy, as the Jewish-polity was? Why then do you, why did Mr. *H.* dissent from that national establishment, which is the most like it of any now in the world; I mean, the *Church of England*? But the church of Christ is *congregational*, consisting only of such, as are charitably believed to be *sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be Saints*, 1 Cor. i. 1.

The preceding observations then explain, fully and consistently, how the covenant was to Abraham, and his seed after him. To his natural seed, *as such*, it was a domestic-covenant, peculiar to Israel after the flesh, and endowed with peculiar national advantages, which outward advantages Moses expressly added to the declaration, Deut. iv. 37. *because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them; and brought thee out in his fight, with his mighty power out of Egypt.* Is this a *spiritual* declaration? If not, to what purpose did Mr. *H.* adduce it, p. 86? To Abraham's *spiritual* seed indeed, the covenant was "a pure gospel covenant of " grace, and " eminently includes all happiness," p. 87. in which sense also, Rev. xxi. 3. is to be understood, *the Lord himself will be their God*; but it is absurd, that " special interest in God, and in the glory " and happiness of heaven itself," was entailed on Abraham's natural seed, by virtue of their descent from him, and is now entailed on a believer's offspring. We have seen too, p. 7. that circumcision was not to Abraham's natural seed, a seal of the righteousness which is by faith.—The *blessing* also of *Abraham upon the gentiles*, p. 88. was, that they who believe should receive the *promise of the spirit though faith*, Gal. iii. 14. not that the seed of believers ever received spiritual blessings, in right of their parents; consequently, the insinuation that the Baptists " deny their children the blessing of " Abraham," and, as much as in them lies, cut them off " from salvation " p. 88. is one of the many *unjust aspersions* this book contains, intended to excite hatred against a people it cannot confute by fair argument.—

We

We do not deny that the covenant of grace in the New-Testament, is in substance the same with the promise to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. but we maintain, that as far as the Abrahamic covenant Gen. xvii, 7. &c. related to his natural-seed, as such, upon which alone circumcision was founded, it was not the covenant of grace; and we have observed, p. 30. that it is the former of these texts the Apostle refers to, by the covenant which the law at *Sinai* could not disannul. Gal, iii. 17. and that this regards Abraham's spiritual seed only, v. 16. — As for the administration of circumcision to the *strangers*, p. 89. tis not true, that all the Profelytes were obliged to be circumcised. The Profelytes *of the gate* were not; but attended upon the services of religion without it. I much doubt also the assertion, that the circumcised Profelytes had no lot, or inheritance in Canaan, like the proper tribes of Israel. But suppose they had none (which the *tribe of Levi* had not) they had other temporal advantages, which made it eligible to be, by circumcision, *naturalized* in Israel. And that such naturalization was not an appointment of an evangelical nature, is sufficiently manifest from the reasoning of the Apostles concerning it, Acts xv. 10. that it was *a yoke*, whereby the circumcised were declared *debtors to do the whole law*, as Paul speaks Gal. v. 3. whereas the same Apostle represents baptism, as emblematical of our *deliverance from the law*, as a covenant of life, and our emancipation into the liberty of the gospel, Rom. vi. 4. 14. The two ordinances are *opposite*, not collateral in their signification; and it is impossible the one could succeed the other. Let a man read the New-Testament carefully, and not trust to the dogmas of Mr. H. and he will find that in Col. ii. 11. 12. the Apostle does not substitute baptism for circumcision; but *opposes* the latter (as a token of being under the law, and therefore in spiritual bondage and fear) to the inward work of grace, the circumcision *without hands*, which he explains, Phil. iii. 3. by deriving our comfort and hope of eternal life, so com-

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pletely from the righteousness of Jesus, held out unconditionally to sinners in the gospel, as that relying upon it wholly, we have no regard to any qualifications or works of our own, as to our expectation of the favour of God; but serve him from the free and unconstrained principles, of gratitude for his unchanging love, and a filial regard for him as our father and God. Such is the true nature of gospel-holiness; and the christian-circumcision which leads to it, being *opposite* to that ordained as a badge of the law, baptism, its emblem, cannot have the same expression the legal circumcision had; but is well represented, by the Apostle, as descriptive of the manner, in which believers are brought to serve God, in the voluntary and noble temper of the Gospel; they are *buried with Christ, and risen to peace, comfort, and holiness, through the faith of the operation of God*, grounded on the fact of the *resurrection of Jesus from the dead*. I am astonished then, that any persons who have experienced this change, from legal slavery to gospel-liberty, can compare baptism which represents the change, to circumcision, which has the contrary signification; or can think it applicable to an infant, incapable of understanding its meaning. From hence then, we may form a proper judgment of Mr. H's.

4. Assertion, That the infants of believers, as such, "*are still in covenant.*" "It is as clear as the sun at noon-day," that Old-Testament believers did not pretend, to put their children spiritually into covenant with God. The Abrahamic-covenant did not imply it. Therefore the denial of baptism to infants, does not "*straiten the manifestations of grace,*" p. 90. Circumcision was repealed indeed, because the *faith*, or gospel being come, it was no longer necessary, as a mark of being *shut up under the law*, Gal iii 23. But a law, putting the seed of believers into the covenant of grace, was not in existence, and it is idle to talk of its *repeal*, p. 91. If the salvation of a Jewish-infant be put upon any other footing, than the salvation of an infidel's child,

i. e.

i. e. God's pure, unstipulated mercy in Christ, it is put upon a footing the gospel knows nothing of. The converted Jews, Act ii. had no notion of themselves, or their children, as already in the covenant of grace. Nor do the texts produced prove any thing of the kind; but are amongst the many instances, of Mr. *H's* popular talent, at misapplying scripture for the sake of the jingle. Is. lxi 9. has not the least relation to the natural seed of believers, p. 92. but to the *spiritual children* of God, *born again* into the church. If also, the gospel-church be called the "Israel of God," because Israel after the flesh was a *type* of it, it was not formed upon the *plan* of the Jewish-polity; but is peculiar to those, who worship God in the spirit. The spiritual Israel also is meant, Heb. viii 8. And if the heathens were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, Eph. ii. 11. the meaning is, that they had not those outward advantages for instruction Israel had; not but that Israel was, spiritually considered, alike afar off; for the Apostle, in that very chapter, v. 3. represents the Jews, as children of wrath *even as others*. The gospel-church indeed enjoys the same privileges in substance, and abundantly greater, than that under the Old-Testament. But this, of putting children into the covenant of grace, was never warranted in either Testament.—However Mr. *H.* pretends p. 93. to more positive evidence, from the New-Testament, than all the preceding. And this, as usual, is from Acts ii. 39. *The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*; concerning which I agree with him, that the Jews having entailed, as a curse, the guilt of the blood of Christ, upon themselves and their children, had reason to be apprehensive for both; and, I will add, that but for this circumstance, there would have been no occasion for mentioning the children. But it seems as if Pedobaptist writers lost their eye-sight, immediately upon reading the former part of this verse. For though the latter part *expressly limits* that interest in
this

this promise, which entitles to baptism, οσοις αὖ even to as many as the Lord shall call, no more notice is taken of it, than if it were not in the Bible. 'Tis plain this last clause is exegetical of the three former, q. d. "The promise is to you, even as many as the Lord shall call; and to your children, or descendants (as explained Acts xiii. 33.) even as many as the Lord shall call; and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call." The text cannot be reduced to any other consistent, or grammatical interpretation; and this also amply fulfils the spiritual meaning of the promise to Abraham, *I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee*; and "the Jews no doubt considered it so;" or else we should have had some intimation of the baptism of their infants, as well as themselves; whereas the contrary inference is to be drawn from the history, v. 42. which tells us, that the very persons that were baptized continued in the Apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. By the use of the word οσοι. Acts, xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*; (whatever be your opinion of the word *ordained*) you understand, that *so many and no more* believed. Is not the sense as plain here, that *none but* such as appeared to be called, were entitled to baptism? Were the declaration made in a civil-sense; were a person to address a promiscuous assembly, "The King promises you, and your children" 40s. pr. ann. *even as many as shall take the oath of allegiance to him*," it would be immediately understood, that none but those who were *capable*, and *willing* to take the said oath, would be entitled to the 40s. As also the *provisos* of an *Act of Parliament* include all the clauses of that *Act*, unless the contrary be particularly specified, so, in all sound criticism, does the *Proviso*, or qualifying clause, in this text, *even as many as the Lord shall call*.

Nor is Mr. H. better supported in his supposition, p. 94. that the scriptures "speak of the salvation of whole families upon the believing of the masters of those families,"

“ milies.” *Lydia’s* household was baptized, because it consisted of *brethren*, Acts xvi. 40. Salvation came to the house of *Zaccheus*, because Christ brought the word of salvation there, and *Zaccheus* himself possessed salvation. It is a great mistake, p. 95. that the coming of salvation to *Zaccheus’s* house was grounded upon his relation (*naturally* is meant) to *Abraham*; as if his *descent* from *Abraham* were the *cause* of his salvation, when the man’s own professions of repentance, in the former verse, shew the meaning to be, that he was a *believer*, consequently one of *Abraham’s spiritual seed*. Why was it not also, with as good a grace, held out, that the reason of *Lazarus’s* conveyance by angels into *Abraham’s bosom*, was that he descended *naturally* from that Patriarch?—The Jailor and his family’s conversion and baptism, are so full in favour of believer’s baptism alone, that it would be wonderful if great pains were not taken, to put a different colour upon the history. I am amazed however, that Mr. *H.* calls him a *son of Abraham*, in the same sense *Zaccheus* was, (for the connection implies as much) and am equally at a loss, to perceive the propriety of his reasoning, p. 94. 95. He seems to mean, that the Jailor, after he believed, was not to look upon himself as *actually* in the state of salvation; but only taken into a covenant, wherein his salvation was still uncertain, being suspended upon terms; for, as explained afterwards, *thou shalt be saved* signifies no more, than to be “ taken into a covenant of salvation;” in which sense also (notwithstanding the convenient word “ externally,” p. 95.) he insinuates, that the “ covenant was administered to the “ whole family,” by virtue of his faith. Or if he allow, that the Jailor, upon believing, became an actual partaker of the gospel salvation, then, upon his principles, as soon as the man believed, his family became thereby, absolute inheritors of saving mercy. I can find no medium between these two interpretations, except, with Dr. *Doddridge*, that the Jailor, upon believing, should himself be saved; and that if his household believed, they also

also should be saved. In proceeding with the story, we find a very fly use made, of the words *probably* and *no doubt*. The history says, the word was spoken to the Jailor, and to *all that were in his house*; but says Mr. H. "*probably* many of them were not of *his family* (perhaps the prisoners)" though it is *more than probable* that even they, being in his custody, must *for that time* have been, in a sense, *of his family*. But he adds, when baptism is mentioned, not "*all that were in his house were baptized,*" but *he and all his*; and here comes the "*no doubt* his little ones." The distinction however, serves no purpose; for if Paul spoke the word to the Jailor, and to all that were in his house, whether this *all* meant more than his family or not, it must at least have included that family, and demonstrates that it consisted of those that could hearken to the word; not of little children, who might have been more conveniently baptized in the morning; and it were better to have left in bed, than taken up to hear preaching at midnight. This remark oversets all the *no doubt* about the little ones, and places the whole story in a light, absolutely inconsistent with infant-baptism; besides that supposing *all his* to mean his own family exclusively, (all his *domestics*, says Dr. Doddridge) it might mean his servants, it must mean his wife; for she was *one flesh* with her husband. Now as the Author contends, that no one in this house believed, but the Jailor himself; might we not as justly argue, that the servants were baptized for the faith of their master, at least, that the wife was *sanctified* by, and baptized for the faith of her husband, 1 Cor. vii. 14. as that there were children baptized, for the faith of their parent? But the whole of Mr. H's. opinion is built, upon a mistake of the adverb *πᾶσι*, v. 34. There is the same reason for its signifying here, that the Jailor, *with all his house* believed, as it does in the *Septuagint* of Ex. 1. 1. that the Patriarchs went down into Egypt, every man *with his house*. Several passages in *Josephus* prove the word to have this signification alone; and *Raphaelius* produces

produces one from *Herodotus*, where it refers to the *family*, not the *dwelling-house*. So that "seriously," Mr. H. does not discover that he had "read and observed the "original;" at least, he was very unwilling to admit the genuine translation, when he misconstrued it *in, or through*. Not to say how ridiculous an idea is suggested in his *Exposition*, and improved upon by Dr. *Guyse*, that the Jailor for joy, *ran up and down every room in his house*; (an action more like phrensy than christian-joy,) that the man rejoiced *with all his family*, who consequently were at age to rejoice with him, is further confirmed p. 96. by the *Syriac-Testament*, (quoted I know not for what reason, unless to confute Mr. H's. argument) for if "he and all the children of his house exulted in the faith of God, then the children were capable of faith and exultation; and both Professor *Michaelis* and Dr. *Watts*, in his *Improvement of the mind*, P. I. p. 348. making respectable mention of this translation, we may conclude it a settled point in the ancient-church, that the Jailor and all his family believed. As to the insinuation, that "if we allow the believing to be spoken of his whole house, it may only signify, that they were all, by baptism, *enrolled amongst visible believers*," it betrays Mr. H's. consciousness, that he could not maintain his former position; and requires only this remark, that to be a *visible believer* is to *appear* to be a believer; which implies, that the person *declares himself* a believer. In any other view of baptism making a believer, it must either, "as a spell, *give faith*; or else *make an hypocrite*. This is not the scriptural account of the baptism of households. Not one of them is specified without sufficient notice, that they were believers; see 1 Cor. i. 16. xvi. 15. Here then I dismiss Mr. H's. first argument, which I have been the longer upon, as he says, p. 100. it is the "main hinge" of the dispute.

L E T T E R I I I .

The inconsistency of Infant-baptism with scripture, continued.

Rev. S I R,

ILL-FOUNDED as Mr. H's first argument is, I might be spared the trouble of replying to his four inferences, which are calculated merely, to cherish the prejudices of weak and unthinking people ; more especially, as I shall consider some very dangerous tenets in them hereafter. But I shall observe here, that if a descent from believers be the way God has taken, to " magnify the riches of " his grace ; to counteract the killing influences of the " first Adam ; to comfort the hearts of believers respect- " ing their seed ; and to seek a godly seed, " a seed of " God, a seed of saints," p. 99. then the pardon of sin is communicated by descent and entail (which indeed Mr. H. does more than hint, p. 98. by speaking of the *better hope* being brought in this way ; and of the " na- " tive covenant-right," of a believer's seed, to the sin-offering, which therefore is *laid at the door*) and also saving grace is thus conferred. For to say that it gives " a life of privilege, not of grace," is to say, that God gives his peculiar privileges to those, who are destitute of his grace ; unless by these privileges he means, that if they appear godly, as they grow up, they will be the people of God ; which is proving *idem per idem*, and is equally true of the seed of unbelievers. To be sure, the children of believers have greater advantages for instruction. But these, though a blessing, do not entitle them to the covenant of grace. Will you
Sir,

Sir, then say, that the seed of a believer is *better recommended* to God's mercy, than that of an unbeliever? This is to hold, that the children of unbelievers have *not as good* a recommendation to God; that he is not so willing to bless them, as the children of believers; in which case, salvation is derived from the piety of parents, not from free-mercy, and instead of "magnifying the riches of divine grace," this scheme would diminish them. If this also be the method whereby the Lord "seeks a *godly seed*," then the gospel is less diffusive of grace than the Old-Testament; for Mr. H. confines this godly seed to the seed of believers; whereas (upon his principles I mean) all the seed of Abraham was in covenant, whether the immediate parents were godly or not. But in truth, the whole is replete with inconsistency; nor do the Baptists, well as they "know the worth of a soul," p. 98, need such fanciful and insufficient grounds of hope, respecting the salvation of their children dying in infancy. Further, to insist that "the profession of christianity is a step towards the truth of it," p. 99. is to pervert the order of the gospel; according to that, the profession always implies the possession of what is professed. Such a perversion of scripture too, is his quotation from Ps. xxii. 30. *a seed shall serve him*, &c. which does not relate at all to the natural-seed of believers, as such; but to those who are themselves believers, called Christ's *seed*. Neither is it fact, that infant-baptism "paves the way to early piety," "by determining the choice on God's side;" but it is too obvious to be denied, that the name of Christ, instead of being "great," has been rendered *cheap*, and exposed to reproach, by being thus affixed to people, who have committed all manner of iniquity. So that while Mr. H. contends for infant-baptism as "one of the fortifications of Christ's kingdom; by which it is secured from the gates of hell, and the design of the powers of darkness, to cut off the line of succession, and wear out the Saints, (for Saints he calls all without distinction, whom

whom he considers as baptized) I on the contrary, am persuaded that it, in conjunction with, perhaps the introduction to other departures from Christ's own direction, opened the way for the powers of darkness, to trample upon the spiritual kingdom of Jesus, and, by confounding the church with the world, to bring the *abomination of desolation* into the temple of God. But suppose, for a moment, that God (who certainly permitted infant-baptism with other encroachments) did make use of it to preserve the *name* of christianity, that will not prove the rite itself to be of God. The *slave-trade* has brought many *Negroes* into countries, where they were blessed with the saving knowledge of Jesus. But will that justify the *slave-trade*? Mrs. *Barbault* has observed, that during the irruptions of the barbarous nations, God made use of the institutions of *monasteries* and *convents*, to be the safe repositories of the sacred oracles, because these seclusions were thought even by the rude soldiery, to retain a peculiar sanctity. But will that vindicate a monastic-life, as authorized by scripture? No more is infant-baptism vindicable upon such a principle. So let us proceed to Mr. *H's*

II. Argument, which runs thus; "The infants of professing parents ought to be admitted visible *church-members*, and therefore, *ordinarily*, they ought to be baptized." But why is the word "*ordinarily*" inserted here? Is it not a concession, that in certain cases they ought not to be baptized? Mr. *H's*. (1) reason under this argument we have already disproved, p. 32. The Jewish-state indeed is once, and only once, called in the New-Testament *ἐκκλησία*, which our *Episcopal-Translators* (greedy of any thing that might have the shadow, of favouring their national establishment of religion) render *church*, Acts vii. 38. in like manner as, to favour their ceremonies, they render the *Passover*. Acts xii 4. *Easter*. But you cannot be ignorant, that *ἐκκλησία* in the *Septuagint* often signifies the *congregation* of Israel, merely in a political sense; and perhaps the only reason the word was applied to them at all, was to intimate that they were *called out* of Egypt,
Hos.

Hos. xi. 1. At all events, circumcision was not an indispensable requisite to their being a *church*; for the greatest part of the *church in the wilderness* (as Stephen called them, in the place already cited) did not receive circumcision, till they were grown up, entered upon Canaan, and were circumcised at *Gilgal*, Josh. v. We have seen too, that the ritual of the Jews was a carnal establishment; whereas the christian church ought to consist only of spiritual members, of *living stones*, 1 Pet. ii. 3. If also infants were spiritual church-members formerly, and that "was" an "essential branch of the constitution," why were all the *females*, being uncircumcised, "cut off from the body?" Was that omission "in judgment or in mercy?" If in judgment, "where did they, as infants, commit a forfeiture?" p. 101. Rather does not the whole prove, that circumcision was not a sign of a spiritual or gospel nature?—But (2) Mr. H. insists, that children are *of the kingdom of God*; and of this we promised some explanation. The kingdom of God, or of heaven, hath *four* significations in the New-Testament. *First*, the *preaching of the word*; as in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. *Secondly*, the *work of grace in the heart*, Matt. xiii. 33. *Thirdly*, the *gospel church-state*, Matt. xiii. 31. and *Fourthly*, the *kingdom of glory above*. The *first* shews that there is a sense, in which infants are not, cannot be subjects of this kingdom, because incapable of hearing the word. And why not then in the *third* sense, because incapable of a personal profession of christianity? Mr. H. confesses, p. 164. that the stipulation is not, properly speaking, the *man's own*, till he give his personal consent to it; so that there is no greater reason for supposing the *third* meaning than the *first*. That infants, so dying, go to heaven, according to the *fourth* signification, and therefore are prepared for it (though we cannot tell the manner how) according to the *second*, we freely grant; and instead of restricting it, with Mr. H. to the seed of believers, p. 98. we extend the blessing, with our Lord, Mark, x. 14. to *all children so dying*

dying; *of such is* (i. e. all who die such are of) *the kingdom of God*. However this is no reason for baptizing them, were it only, that we cannot distinguish between those who will, and those who will not die. Besides, notwithstanding Mr. H's. ridicule, p. 103. there is manifestly another good view of the words suggested v. 15. of *such like*; not for any innate excellence in little children, but that Christ's disciples think meanly of themselves, as very children in knowledge and experience. Our Lord also did compare his followers to "lambs" and "doves," p. 103. And if Rom. 1. 32. had not expressed "similitude," but simple identity, *αὐτα, hæc, these things* would have been used, not *τοιαῦτα, talia, such like things*. I cannot therefore see the propriety of adducing our Lord's words, *of such is the kingdom of God*, for infant-baptism; and his conduct, illustrative of his words, is directly against it. He encouraged the bringing infants to him; but did he baptize them, or order them to be baptized? No. He only *took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them*. The Baptists accordingly bring their children to Christ, and dedicate them after so plain a pattern. Had he applied water, they would. But they do not think it "carnal reason or misguided zeal," to follow Christ, however slightly Mr. H. speaks, p. 134. of copying his bright example. Yet he is obliged to confess, p. 104. "It is true Jesus did not baptize these children;" for which he gives a curious reason; baptism "was not yet settled to be the door of admission." *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Infant-baptism was not settled. So I believe. But that baptism itself was settled, is manifest from John iv. 1. 2. where, as administered by the disciples of Jesus, in his name and by his authority, it is considered as equivalent to its being his own act, and no doubt was regular christian-baptism, the example for which is so plain, "that his ministers are not justified in giving this sign" to any other, than appear real disciples. But if by the word *tantamount* Mr. H. mean, that what

Christ

Christ did to these infants, was *full as beneficial* as if he had baptized, or sprinkled them; we are not inclined to dispute this matter; for we are quite of the opinion.

I am in the course of these animadversions, frequently struck with the incongruity of one part of Mr. H's. argument to another part; an inconsistency sometimes so glaring, that it is admirable both ideas could drop from the same pen. Such an one we have p. 105. Was it that he had nothing better to compare the kingdom of Christ to, or had forgot that our Lord said, *My kingdom is not, in any sense whatever, of this world*, that he makes human governments, and incorporated societies amongst men, to be models for the christian-church? But his best confutation is had, by appealing to the worldly similes he adopts. Though it is such another error to say, that "as a freeman begets a freeman," so a christian begets a christian, as it would be, that a wise man necessarily begets a wise man, yet were the parallel just, nothing is got by it; for even the son of a freeman does not enjoy the privileges of that freedom, till he be at an age capable of *taking up his freedom*, and so entering personally into the body corporate, as baptism is a personal-entrance into the church. No doubt all born under the sound of the gospel, are, as soon as competent, bound by its laws; and this whether the children of believers or not. But how does the being in "natural allegiance" to a particular government, as all born in the country are, prove a child's title to the special privileges of that government, before he act for himself, and give evidence that he is a good subject? Tis herein that, as we said, Mr. H. contradicts himself. P. 69. he asserts it to be a great mistake, that all who are the king's subjects must take an oath of allegiance, in order to be entitled to privileges. The same is insinuated, p. 105. But let us hear him, p. 167. "Our law requires, that he who is born within the king's allegiance *shall, when he is of the*
" age

" age of twelve years, take an oath of allegiance, and
 " promise to be true and faithful to the king;" for
 which he cites *Coke's Institutes*. What are we then to
 infer from the whole? That baptism, which Mr. H.
 calls *an oath of allegiance*, ought to be administered to
 new-born infants? No. Would it be wise to administer
an oath, to one at such an age? The true analogy is,
 that baptism, a declaration of allegiance to king Jesus,
 ought to be deferred, until a person is able to understand
 the duty, whether that be at twelve years of age, under
 or over. In short, the whole of pages 163, 164, 165
 confutes his reasoning here, demonstrating that the *con-*
firmation, declaration of assent, subscribing with the hand
to the Lord, and solemn investiture recommended, are to
 make up for some deficiency in the baptism of infants,
 and that the time for signifying consent, is the only pro-
 per time for baptism, or *taking the oath* to Christ. Tis
 said, that common-law is built upon common-sense.
 But Mr. H's zeal for infant-baptism, would separate the
 interest of Christ, from that of common-sense, and to
 that end, strain texts of scripture from their right
 meaning. Thus from his explanation of Ps. cxvi. 16.
 a cursory reader is led to think, that the mercy David
 thanks God for; was derived by a title, not from his
 father *Jesse*, but from his mother, as if on her account,
 he was born in God's family, and had an interest in the
 privileges and provision of his house; whereas the He-
 brew phrase rendered *son of thine hand-maid*, is an ex-
 pression of contempt, as *Ishmael*, tho' Abraham's son,
 was called the *son of the bond-woman*, and turned out of
 doors at a moment's warning, without daring to make
 the smallest claim upon the family. Nor did the
 the Psalmist mean to signify his title to, or interest in
 privilege or provision; but to magnify the unmerited
 goodness of God to a creature who had no claim at
 all; q. d. " I am before thee as a *slave, the son of a slave*
 " whom thou mightest have disposed of for life or
 " death; to any lot in life thou didst please, or have
 " cast

“ off altogether ; yet thou hast loosened my bonds, and
 “ brought me into the liberty of the sons of God.”—
 Again, to say that the Baptists “ will not let their
 “ children be God’s servants, p. 106. and apply David’s
 being driven into the land of the Philistines, and so
 in effect bid *Go and serve other Gods*, to the Baptists,
 on account of declining to baptize their children is
 one of Mr. H’s. *popular* comments, and a specimen
 of his and his Editor’s *charity*; but these untrue reflec-
 tions give no pain, except for the reflectors. As for Josh.
 xxii. 24. the Reubenites and Gadites did not erect an
 altar for burnt-offering, and to *oppose* that in the Lord’s
 Tabernacle ; but merely for their children to *see to*, v. 10.
 i. e. as a *picture*, to remind them of the Tabernacle-
 worship (an equivalent to which it is now, to instruct our
 children from God’s word;) but infant-baptism is a
 practical error, which would destroy the baptism Christ
 ordained. Mr. H. twice declares it to be *much better* than
 Christ’s own direction, Mark xvi. 16. *believe and be*
baptized, p. 179, 188. What has been already offered,
 p. 32. concerning the *adoption*, &c. pertaining to Israel,
 is so sufficient, that we “ desire no more” to prove,
 that it is not favourable to infant-baptism.

III. Mr. H. proceeds, p. 107. “ The infants of be-
 “ lieving parents are in some sense holy, and therefore
 “ have a right to the ordinance of baptism,” in explain-
 ing which he insists, they are or may be so, in every sense
 of the word ; as (1) concerning *Inherent-holiness*, he asks
 p. 108. “ Who dares say they are *not capable* even of
 “ this ?” I do not know any body who dares to say it ;
 but repeat, that as *all* infants have it not, but all have
 inherent sin ; and as we cannot distinguish between those
 who have grace and those who have not, as well as that non-
 age cannot be benefited, by an intelligent means of
 grace, it is improper to administer baptism, until the
 party is of age to discover inherent holiness, by a know-
 ledge and belief of the truth.—But (2) Something of a
Federal-holiness is principally pleaded for, p. 108. And

here, as Mr. H's main argument is from the forced analogy, between Israel of old and the seed of believers, I am obliged to remind you, that many persons received circumcision (as Ishmael, Elau, &c.) who were not holy, in the sense Israel after the flesh was called so; and that the Israelitish-females were in that sense holy, who yet received nothing of the nature of circumcision. From whence it is fairly inferible, upon his own principles, that this supposed federal-holiness, is no ground for admission to particular ordinances, without an express command; and that were the seed of believers, in fact, more privileged than the offspring of others, that, without positive direction, would be no reason for baptizing them. But the texts cited are not pertinent to the Author's design. Rom xi 16 17 does not speak of federal, but inherent holiness, which Mr. H. confesses is not communicated by birth. The Apostle warning the converted gentiles, against exalting themselves above the Jews, on account of the rejection of the latter, intimates that vast numbers of them would hereafter be called, of which these already called were an earnest. This earnest he stiles the *first fruits* (alluding to the offering of first fruits) the greater number, yet to be called, *the lump*. And if the *root* mean Abraham, the father of the faithful, on the pattern of whose faith believers are formed, those here considered as *holy*, are not the natural branches, as such (which are, by that title, plainly distinguished v. 21. from the holy branches, and many of which are *cut off*) but the spiritual seed of Abraham amongst Israel, the Israel who *shall be saved*, v. 26. Unless therefore it could be proved, that the natural seed of Abraham, as such, was also his spiritual seed, and that the natural seed of believers, as such, are the spiritual seed of Abraham, the holiness in this text has nothing to do with them; for it is *by faith*, v. 20. not by descent from believers, that every one partakes of the root and and fatness of the good olive-tree, from which this *holiness* is derived. The Apostle therefore cautions the gentiles lest, by their pride, they

they should discover the same unbelief, for which the Jews were deprived of the gospel, v 22. Yet it is allowed, that great things are said in this chapter, about God's regard for Israel after the flesh, for Abraham their ancestor's sake. But those will neither amount to the holiness spoken of, nor entitle to christian-ordinances, nor prove that believers in common stand, in the same kind of covenant-relation to their immediate offspring, that Abraham did to his posterity. Or even supposing the *holiness*, in this chapter, had relation to something Israel possessed, by natural descent from Abraham, the holiness of the gospel-church is of a much higher, more refined and spiritual nature, than what was called so under the law. The Old-Testament ceremonies would at best have been but *types* of the New-Testament ordinances. If infants, if the ungodly in common with the godly, lawfully partook of the types, only the godly have a right to the ordinances typified. Israel might indiscriminately therefore partake of circumcision and the passover, when none but the spiritual Israel ought of baptism and the Lord's supper; even as the Apostle observed, Heb. xiii. 10. *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle*, and our Lord said to the woman of Samaria concerning his church, in contradistinction from the Jewish, that the time was *now* come, when the Father would seek, as his visible people, those only who *worshipped him in spirit and in truth*, John iv. 23. Hence also, an objection is obviated, "That, according to the Baptists, the privileges of children under the gospel, are fewer than those under the law." The abrogation of the ceremonial holiness was no loss of privilege; and all who hear the gospel have abundantly greater advantages than were enjoyed under the law, without administering the peculiar ordinances of Christ, to those who are incapable of profiting by them. No doubt Mr. H. would remark here, as he does below, "This is to put the seed of believers upon a level with the *unclean, the seed of*"

" *the*

“ *the gentiles;*” the proper answer to which proud suggestion, is from the text he quotes, Acts x. 28. that the seed of a gentile or an unbeliever, is no more to be accounted unclean, than the seed of a Jew, or a believer; and experience shews the latter as such, to be in no other manner “ separated and set apart for God,” than as every believer will pray for his children.—The other text is 1 Cor. vii. 14. But as the Apostle was there dissuading the believing husband or wife, from separating from the unbelieving, *lest thereby* the children should be rendered unclean; (*else were your children unclean, but now, i. e. by your living together, they are holy*) if this *federal-holiness*, or right to christian ordinances, be intended, I ask, how could the simple circumstance of a believing husband or wife’s living with an unbeliever, a christian with an heathen, constitute the church-membership of the children? Or how could the simple departure of the believing partner from the unbelieving, cast the children out of the covenant, and make void their right to baptism? According to this notion, their church-membership depends upon a very brittle and unsubstantial basis; for the actual possession of faith in the husband or wife, is not sufficient to secure the inheritance to the seed, unless the believer abide with the infidel; all which must be admitted, if the Author’s view of the words be allowed of. But tis certain that in Mal. ii. 14. 15. quoted p. 98. the Lord means the influence of a chaste matrimonial-attachment, between one man and one woman, in raising up *a godly seed*; and this is a very consistent sense here; that the believing partner living cordially with the unbeliever, in a family way, the children would have the greater advantages, of instruction in the *means leading to holiness*, and be obliged to greater outward decency; whereas if a separation took place, the children would not be taken proper care of. But this will no more argue for a right to christian-ordinances, transmitted from parents to children, than for the same right to be communicated
by

by a believing husband to his unbelieving wife, or the wife to her husband, either of whom, if an unbeliever, is said in the same verse, to be sanctified by the believing partner, exactly as the children are holy.—We have already, p. 11. answered Mr H's.

IV. Argument, "That the infants of believing parents are *disciples*;" but shall add here (1) That it is very odd to call those disciples, who are merely "*intended for learning*," (i. e. whose parents wish them to be scholars) before they appear to have an inclination for learning, or are put to it. Neither our Lord nor the Baptists cast children out of his school, when capable of being taught; but that Jesus meant little children as such, by the command *feed my lambs*, is another of Mr. H's. popular misinterpretations. Our Lord spoke of persons newly converted; *new-born babes, who desire the sincere milk of the word*.—It is also (2) a very deep thought, that because certain Judaizing teachers would have imposed circumcision, upon the Gentile converts, Acts, xv. 10. and the Apostles ordered them *not* to put upon the disciples *a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, therefore children are called disciples. Really, I cannot see how the medium supports the conclusion. Mr. H's. syllogism contains a fallacy, in its very construction. I need not remind you of the rule in Dr. Watts's *Logic*, (Part II. ch. 2.) but I am surprized it did not occur to you, in contracting Mr. H's. argument, that in all regular syllogisms, "*If one of the premises be negative the conclusion must be negative*." According to this rule, the above syllogism must run thus.

Circumcision was commanded *not* to be imposed upon the disciples.

But infants received circumcision.

Therefore infants are *not* disciples.

For you can never form a regular affirmative conclusion from these premises; and with a better appearance of argument you might assert, that the *children* were called the *fathers*, than that they were called *disciples*. I have
examined

examined all the texts brought to prove, that the infants of believers, as such, are Christ's disciples, and rest my appeal, whether, in all those texts, our Lord does not speak, either of persons converted, so as to look upon themselves to be but children (indeed sometimes a mere term of fondness for his disciples, Matt. x. 42) or else of some particularly hopeful child, who in early life discovered real religion, as Mark, ix. 37. Luke, ix. 48 and especially Matt. xviii. 4. where the child *humbled himself*, and tis evident was old enough to understand Christ calling to him, and testify his regard for Jesus, by coming at his call.—The Baptists agree so far with Mr. H.

V. “ That it is the duty of all christian-parents, “ *solemnly to dedicate and give up their children to God;*” but they are afraid God would account it arrogance in them, to claim the covenant of grace, as their children's entailed estate. Neither do they see how promising for them can enhance their natural obligations to duty; because God has so constructed the mind, that no man will seriously consider himself as bound to obedience, or more bound to it than otherwise he would be, by the promise of another for him; and the uniform conduct of Pedobaptists, confirms the Baptists in this idea —If also the *little ones* are mentioned, Deut. xxix. 11. So are the *hewers of wood* and *drawers of water*; and by parity of reason, the slave might as well be baptized for the faith of his master, as the child in right of his father. —Further, though it is an unhappy illustration of the matter to say, p. 112. that as a man can bind his heir to pay his debts, so he can bind his child in his duty to God (because it looks as if the son were to make up for the duty owing by the father; at least, as no man can bind his son to pay debts, unless he leave property sufficient, he ought when he binds him to God, to transfer a proportionable quantity of grace, for the discharge of his duty) and though *Jonadab*, and *Jephtha* particularly, are curious examples, of parental power, yet we have no doubt that, as far as their influence and authority reach,
parents

parents ought to oblige their children, "*while in their house,*" p 111. to behave well. But they cannot promise or bargain for themselves, and still less make contracts with God for their children — Tis also a poor business, to set parents upon making contracts, which may be rendered void by after "*refusal*" and "*forfeiture,*" p. 112. and which it is certain the children, if they live, will forfeit by sin. No serious parent can take comfort from such engagements. As for the remark, p 112. that parents have power to benefit their children, by adhering to the covenant, as the wicked prejudice their's by the Lord's visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, Mr. H. observes, p. 194 that the childrens imitation of their fathers crimes, was the reason of the punishment, and particularly insists, p. 127. that under the gospel there is no entail of curses. He should have remembered further, that spiritual blessings are not communicated, as punishments for sin are inflicted. Judgments are the *deserved reward*; blessings a *free-gift*. Consequently God does not bind himself, by giving spiritual blessings to the parent, to bestow them also upon the children. The Baptists, however, are not the people, that "will not give their children to God." They wish to see them "*part of the price*" of the Redeemer's blood. But says Mr. H. p. 113. There is no "*better way*" of dedicating children, than by baptism. Not to say that he tacitly confesses, that another method is *as good*, the *betterness* of the way depends entirely upon the expressed will of the institutor, not upon Mr. H's. forced analogies. His business was to have shewn plainly, whereabouts baptism is ever spoken of, in the New-Testament, but as a man's personal-dedication of himself to God. Or if we must reason from what *we suppose* to be better, upon Mr. H's. principle, "that infants are capable of receiving the "*privileges of the covenant,*" what can be *better* than (as Mr. Pierce and Dr. Priestley irrefragably argue, from the examples of the *Fathers*) to give them the Lord's supper for their establishment, as well as baptism for their initiation

initiation. We have seen p. 23. that the Jews gave the passover to young children.—I do not know who those are that say, “that our children are to be dedicated to God, “no otherwise than our houses, and estates, and callings” p. 114. we ought indeed to devote the latter to him *without reserve*; and we can do no more in regard to our children. But we are sensible that our offspring have immortal souls, which makes us more importunate with God for them, then for any earthly concern. And unless it could be proved, that baptism confers an inalienable right to divine grace, that earnestness is all a considerate parent can mean, by dedication therein. For at the time Mr. H. speaks of it’s sealing in the covenant of grace, he allows that a person may afterwards exclude himself from that covenant. So that the utmost a pious parent can do is to pray for his children. He is at no greater certainty about their salvation, than he is about his calling’s not failing. or his house not being burnt; no greater certainty than a Baptist, who brings his child unconditionally to Christ to bless him, as they did, Mark x. 13.—I might pass by Mr. H’s.

VI. Argument, from Matt. xxviii. 19. having seen, p. 11. that our Lord’s commission was that instruction precede baptism. But it is natural to remark here, how amply some of Mr. H’s. observations, under this head, justify that explanation. For when a general enlists soldiers, he makes proposals as inducements to enlist, *before* he puts the money or colours into their hands. The very act of giving the colours implies consent first obtained, and that the soldier opens his hand to receive them. Thus also sealing a deed, or giving *livery and seisin* of an estate, implies a previous agreement to convey that estate, as baptism does the knowledge and agreement of the person baptized. Upon these principles I can easily perceive, how instruction and faith are the “the *soul*,” and immersion in water “the *body*” or outward representation of baptism; but infant-sprinkling is neither body nor soul. Indeed Mr. H. seems
aware

aware of the consent of the parties in his illustrations, by an insinuation, p. 115. that infants are " a consent-
 " *ing part* of nations ;" alais! How? " By those, says
 " he," who are *the trustees of their wills,*" which brings
 us, as before, to the doctrine of *Godfathers*, only that
 he substitutes the parents for the strangers. But this is a
 distinction without a difference, if by *trustees* he mean
 those that can *promise* and *vouch*; for a parent can, no
 more than an alien, promise for his child. But if by
trustee he mean a *natural authority*, to command while
 under his care, as this power does not involve the child's
 consent also, it is not a reason for calling the children
 of believers, as such, Christ's disciples.—With this ob-
 servation we leave, what Mr. H. calls his *magna-charta*
 for infant-baptism, being equally willing to abide, with-
 out the least apprehension of " falling," by our Lord's
 commission, or by the doctrine and practice of the pri-
 mitive churches, which were entirely consonant to their
one lawgiver's direction. Hence we only read of such as
gladly received the word, and professed to *believe with all*
their hearts, being baptized; and while the Acts of the
 Apostles support this truth, it would not move us, could
 Mr. H. bring all the uninspired *Fathers* for his practice;
 for what were they but men, very weak and fallible
 men? However, if their testimony be of any weight, we
 have the most authentic on our side. As observed, p.
 143. there was so late as Cyprian's time (about the year
 250) a dispute, whether baptism, like circumcision,
 should be deferred to the *eighth-day*, and it proves (con-
 trary to Mr. H's. assuming assertion, that the practice
 itself " had never been disputed") that it was a custom
 but lately taken up, and the formulary of which had
 not yet been adjusted; for if it had regularly succeeded
 circumcision, the circumstance of time had been settled,
 some hundreds of years before. *Austin's* remark also,
 p. 186 absurd as it is, shews that many in his day dis-
 allowed of infant-baptism. And *Lucian's* derision of his
 baptism as only the change of his name, p. 157. evinces

that he had the name of heathen, before that of christian, consequently his baptism had been adult. What change of name does infant-baptism give? The anecdote related by *Dionysius Alexandrinus*, p. 265. demonstrates, likewise, that it was the usual custom of the ancient church, to baptize those who were able to answer questions, which made the solemnity so affecting to the spectator spoken of. Once more; let a man peruse *Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho* (of which, by the way, I wish to see a good *English* translation published) and he will find, that the most ancient christian-writers had no notion of circumcision, either as an act of religious worship, or a seal of the covenant of grace, or a pattern for the administration of baptism. In short, it would be a good reply to Mr. H's. book, and is a noble testimony, that the church, in the first and second centuries, were totally ignorant of that argument, which is now the main pillar of infant-baptism, the Jewish circumcision.—Considering then, that this practice is so unsupported by fair interpretations of scripture, it is not wonderful the Baptists have very capital objections to it. It's inconsistency with the general definition of baptism is one.—The inattention to the distinction between the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, and the consequent misapplication of scripture, is another.—The administration of circumcision to those who were not included in the Abrahamic-covenant, and it's non-administration to the Jewish females, who were, as much as the males, within that covenant, is an unanswerable objection to the analogy between it and christian-baptism; as well as that it's administration without enquiry into the faith, or moral character of the parents, is an insuperable objection, on Mr. H's. own grounds of infant-baptism. But these and the like he, or his Editor, have prudently passed over; and would fain have their readers believe, that the Baptists have *only three* objections to urge; which three, however, are left unanswered. Ex. Gr.

I. " That

I. " That infants are not capable of the ends of baptism, having neither understanding nor faith." Now let us have that reverence for the word of God, as to read the New-Testament account of baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21. *The answer of a good conscience by the resurrection of Christ*; (implying faith in the full efficacy of the death of Christ, as manifested by his resurrection, and a conscience cleansed from guilt by that belief) of which baptism, signifying a burial and resurrection, as well as washing in water, is so apt, and descriptive an emblem. This is that *one*, that *only baptism* the Bible knows of. Are infants capable of this? Or can you shew us the place, wherein circumcision is thus defined? But, says Mr. H. " It was a seal of justification, Rom. iv. 11. " and of sanctification," Deut. " xxx. 6. and baptism is " no more." Besides the absurdity of *sealing infants as justified*, whose actual justification cannot be even presumed, the former of these texts we have replied to, p. 7. 35. And if circumcision were a token of sanctification, the Apostle, plainly teaches us, Rom. ii. 25. Gal. v. 3. that it was not of an evangelical nature; but a badge of obligation to fulfil the whole law; which sentiment is also confirmed by Deut. xxx. 6. for Moses does not call it a seal, or assurance, that God would sanctify Israel; but prophecies, that time would discover legal restraints, to be insufficient to induce them to love the Lord with all their heart, and that an inward and superior circumcision would be proved necessary; which also Paul speaks of, Col. ii. 11.—The two other replies to this objection we have obviated, p. 45. and p. 54.

II. I know it is objected, " That infant-baptism doth more harm than good;" and this is a remark so obvious, from the multitudes who are, as Mr. H. allows, " strengthened in their delusions" by it, that it is difficult to point out, what good it ever did. We will not indeed deny, that some wicked people have abused adult-baptism; but that these are *not many*, that they are comparatively a *very few*, may be argued from fact, and
 From

from the nature of the thing. Let me, Sir, put the question to you closely, as a man of consideration, Has it a tendency to harden men in sin, to instruct them, to examine them strictly, to obtain all the satisfaction we can, respecting their knowledge and possession of real religion, and then, upon a solemn profession of their faith and obedience, solemnly to baptize them? Upon second thoughts, you will not say it has.—I think also, considering all events since Mr. *H's*. death, it was ill-judged to bring up his piety, as the effect of his infant-baptism; because if its moral-influence were so efficacious in one instance, why not in another, in all? It pains me, but by inserting this bravado, you have forced me to remind you, that Mr. *H* had a Son, with whom no doubt he took as much pains, as his father, Mr *Philip Henry*, did with him; but who did not walk in the steps of his fathers; who was, in every respect, the reverse to them. Now, this son being professedly born, or put into the covenant, and trained up in the belief of an actual part in it, why did not God work upon him through the moral-influence of infant-baptism, as well as the father asserts God did upon him? Is it not righteous in the Lord, to disappoint people's expectations in their children, when those expectations are built upon such unwarrantable grounds? I know it will be replied, “ Mr. *H's*. son did not, as he grew up, *fulfil the conditions*.” But if the good work wrought in the father, were owing to God's blessing upon his infant-baptism, p. 118. why did not that blessing concur as efficaciously, with that of his son? Or if the son's non compliance with the conditions were the reason of his gracelessness, was it on the other hand, the *naturally good* disposition of the father to the covenant, that *moved God* to “ work a good work “ upon his soul?” In one word, the matter comes to this dilemma; either Mr. *H's*. own innate goodness procured that grace, which concurred with his infant-baptism, to make the difference of character between him and his son; or else tis inconceivable, why the
blessings

blessings said to descend to the seed of believers, by virtue of their parents faith, and their own baptism, did not reach the son as well as the father.—But.

III. It is objected, “ We have no precept nor precedent in all the New-Testament, for infant-baptism;” and as all parties allow this fact, it is a most capital objection in the matter of a gospel-ordinance. How is it obviated? The (1) Answer is that kind of recrimination which a man, unable to refute a charge against him, makes of faults his accuser is guilty of, not to justify himself, but silence his adversary; q. d. “ *If I am a thief, you are cheater.*” Suppose that the Baptists did without scriptural-authority, admit women to the Lord’s supper, would that prove infant-baptism to be right? Were the recrimination just, I would rather give my vote for denying women the supper, then take occasion from the intrusion of one error, to wink at the inroads of another. But when we read, Acts i. 14. that the women joined in prayer and supplication; and Acts ii. 1. that the same persons were all, with one accord in the temple; and Acts ii. 18. 42. 46. that the whole church, of which women were a part, *broke bread*, as confessed by Mr. H. p. 29. and Acts v. 1. that Sapphira, as well as Ananias, was of the church; and Acts, viii 12. that women, as well as men, were baptized, it needs no further proof of their admission to the Lord’s supper, which they are as capable of profiting by as the men; and objections such as these, intimate a scarcity even of plausible suggestions, to puzzle an opponent. Draw as fair an inference for the baptism of infants. The (2) Reply is a challenge, “ to shew a precept, or precedent, for baptizing the child of any one christian, at years of discretion.” He must mean to set us upon proving, that the children which were infants at, or born after the conversion of the parents, were *not* baptized before they became adult; for he allows that if adult at the time, the profession must be their own. But I cannot see the force of this challenge to prove a negative. Tis sufficient

sufficient for us, that the gospel which was ordered to be preached to *every creature*, runs, *He that believeth and is baptized*, Mark xvi. 16. consequently, no other gospel is to be preached to *any creature*; and that the promise limited to *as many as the Lord shall call*, Acts ii 39. implies that even the seed of believers must be called, before they have a title to baptism. These general precepts would, in any other case, be thought to supersede the necessity of more particular directions, specifying that the children of believers must be adult. If I had an estate, and another man made pretensions to it, the law would deem it unreasonable in me to prove that he had *no* right. It would set him upon proving that he had *any* title at all. So here, it is not our business to prove, that the children of believers *were* not baptized until grown up, but your's that they *were* baptized, *before* they arrived at years of discretion. The cases are strictly parallel, and shew Mr. H's. misapplication of his *legal adage*. Our "*estoppel*" consists of a general statute, with which the baptism of infants is inadmissible. For the matter to be set at large, he should have brought a repeal, or enlargement of that statute. But the uncandid nature of this challenge will be seen, by comparing p. 119. with p. 68. in the latter of which he tells us, that the records of the New-Testament relate only to the *planting* of christianity; and indeed they do not contain the history of any particular church, longer than about *three* or *four* years. Yet he calls upon us to prove a point, that would require such an history, for at least *twelve* or *fourteen* years. What unreasonable proofs, would not such controvertists extort from the Baptists? Will you permit me also, in my turn, to "*challenge you all*" to shew me one good reason, why the adult children of believers are not as much entitled to the seal of the covenant, from the faith of their parents, and without any faith of their own, as the infant-seed? Upon your principles it would be a misfortune, for the son of a Jew or Heathen to be adult,

at the conversion of his father. For if an infant, he would of course have the seal of the covenant, in right of his believing parent; but if adult, this entail of privilege is cut off, and he is left to the unconditional mercy of God, with the Baptists and other sinners. But I have a more direct reply to Mr. *H*'s. challenge. The church at *Rome* was planted about the year 43. the Epistle to the Romans written about the year 58. There were some then, it is highly probable, of this church, who were very young when their parents were converted, or born after such conversion, as there intervened a space of 15 years. But none of them received baptism in infancy; for the Apostle's words, *so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death*, ch. vi. 3. either mean, that by baptism they were made actual *partakers* of the merits of Christ's death; or that they were baptized upon a credible profession, of their belief of his death. The first would make baptism to confer salvation. The latter is as forcible an argument, that none but the adult, and professedly believing descendants of this church were baptized, as it is, according to Dr. *Doddridge*, that some of their parents were christians, at the birth of these descendants.—Upon the whole, as we have a full and clear account of baptism in the New-Testament; and yet Mr. *H*. allows, p. 70. that there are puzzling difficulties in that of infants; and as the plain directions of the New-Testament are for believer's baptism, we may rest satisfied, that infant-baptism has no scriptural-warrant, and that the objections to it, after all Mr. *H*'s. laboured explanations, remain with undiminished validity. I am, &c.

P. S. In addition to the remarks on circumcision, I beg leave to observe here, that Dr. *Taylor* of *War-rington*, in his treatise on the *Covenant of Grace*, p. 25. makes a groundless distinction, between circumcision *after the manner of Moses*, Acts xv. 1. and circumcision *after the manner of Abraham*; as if in the former view only it was a yoke; that is, when the ceremonial law

law was instituted, it was *then* considered as a badge of obligation to obey that law, (at least the christian Pharisees thought so) but was not a yoke before that time; whereas the Apostle, Rom ii. 25. 26 Gal v. 3. intimates, that it was called so, because a token of obligation to fulfil the *moral-law*, as well as comply with the ceremonial; in short a mark of that conditional-covenant he speaks of, p. 21. as republished at *Horeb*, to shew the nature and “ demerit of sin, and to bring to Christ; not of the covenant of grace, which was the rule of justification ”—The rest of the Dr’s. piece (besides the peculiar difficulties of his scheme, which are well animadverted upon by two Pedobaptists, Dr. *Guyse*, in the Preface to his *Paraphrase on the Romans*, and in Dr. *Erskine* of *Edinburgh’s Essays*.) so much resembles Mr. *H’s* reasoning, that the same reply will serve for both. P. 22. he considers the blessings communicated, by descent, to a believer’s seed, to be given “ *freely, absolutely, and unconditionally, as an estate absolutely given to a man and his heirs for ever.* ” P. 45. he particularizes these blessings to be, “ *Election, High-calling, Adoption, Remission of sins* ” &c. But when he explains, p. 51. though instead of bluntly mentioning *conditions*, he cautiously uses the words “ *principles, means motives &c.* ” yet it comes to this at last, that a man may “ lose the benefit of that estate, which he before declared to be absolutely given,” and may “ fail of eternal salvation.” *Doth a fountain send forth, at the same place, sweet water and bitter?*—I beg leave to refer you also, to *Poole’s Annotations*, for proof that Paul alluded to Gen. xii 3. in the calculation of 430 years, Gal. iii. 17. not to Gen. xvii. 7. the date of which falls short of that number 24 years.

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L E T T E R IV.

The inutility of Infant-baptism.

Rev. S I R,

I READILY admit, that were infant-baptism of an indisputably good tendency, it would be a strong presumption in its favour ; but totally inconsistent as it is with scripture, from thence arises a suspicion, that it is not that beneficial practice, in a religious view, which its friends would fain represent it to be. I say in a *religious* view ; for that it has abundantly contributed, to the worldly grandeur and popularity of national-churches, so called, I am not inclined to dispute. Indeed it reflects no honour upon the practice, that it is so pleasing to men of the world ; nor does this mark it as one of Christ's ordinances. But I mean, in this Letter, to consider what Mr. H. advances concerning its *usefulness*. Injuriouly as he speaks of the Baptists, as like the heathens, *without natural-affection*, p. 71. " cutting their children off from salvation," p. 88. not " letting them be servants in Christ's family, but bidding them *Go and serve other Gods* ;" yea " delivering them to Satan," p. 106. with a vast deal more of the kind ; yet when he comes to explain the *Necessity* and *Efficacy* of infant-baptism, Chap. III. I cannot see what harm its omission is productive of. He disclaims its necessity to salvation, p. 126. though the omission have proceeded from, what he calls, the " neglect of man." Nay, if p. 67. he treat it as a *conveyance*, which gives, *a right and title* ; p. 127. he is as positive, that provided the parent be a believer, his child " has an interest in the promises of God," which

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the “want of the mere sign” cannot disannul; and therefore all the declamation, about putting our children into the camp of satan, and doing what we can to damn them &c. however obvious the drift, is but a bugbear to frighten silly women. Accordingly, the Author often speaks of baptism, p. 115. 145. as not *giving*, or *confering*, but *recognizing* the title. It might be proper to ask then, If the privileges in debate descend lineally from father to son, in whose sight is this recognizance to be made? If in God’s sight (which Mr. H. insinuates, p. 130. by “putting the child’s name into the gospel-grant;” a name that he maintained was there before) I can make nothing of it but a very unnecessary piece of business; nor can I find in the Bible, that because *Ruth’s* regard for the true God which induced her to prefer Israel to Moab, is stiled *trusting under his wings*, ch. ii. 12. therefore this phrase was applied indiscriminately to those who were circumcised p. 29. It is true, p. 130. he treats baptism as a species of “*regeneration*,” in like manner as the *church of England* he complains of, p. 127. But obliged here to confess, that in the case of adult persons, something more is necessary to bring them to heaven, he finds it needful to suppose two sorts of regeneration; one, to take the children of believers to heaven, if they die in infancy, but not sufficient to carry them through life if they grow up; so that though made new-creatures in baptism, they may become again old-creatures, and need another regeneration to fit them for glory, if indeed they do not miss of it at last; the good sense of all which I leave to those, who can see into the utility of infant-baptism, from this fair statement of Mr. H’s. words.—But if by recognizing a title be meant, that infant-baptism affords those considerations, which the party baptized may improve the future recollection and meditation of, for the purposes of religion, let us see what those considerations are, and whether the simple dedication of a child by prayer to God, after Christ’s example, will not answer every good purpose without infant-baptism, of which we have no example at all.

all. This presumed *usefulness* is contained in Chap. v. where, in a very tedious and tautological manner, the Author treats of the *Practical-improvement* of our baptism, *more especially* infant-baptism; thus preferring the latter to the baptism, he does not deny Christ appointed. When I apply the charge, of *setting his threshold by God's threshold, and his post by God's post*, Ezek. xliii 8. to Mr. H. tis at least as good an application, and as charitable, as some of his to his opponents; and it is a charge enormously verified, by explicit declarations in this chapter; see also p. 175. — But the whole of the observations on the *utility* of infant-baptism, is comprized in the following particulars. *First*, That it bespeaks an *early*, an *hereditary* quarrel with sin; yea, with *original sin* itself, p. 185. Now it cannot bespeak such an *early* quarrel, but in one of these four ways; either that the party baptized derives from thence, an *early antipathy* to sin; or that the parent makes an *early promise* for the child; or that the parent expresses his *prayer* for the child, that in early life he may quarrel with sin; or lastly, that infant-baptism is significant of the *obligation*, to an early quarrel with it. The first is not true in fact. The second we have disproved, p. 54. No parent can promise for his child, or be responsible for him, any further than relates to a care of his education. But if prayer be intended, this end is as well answered, by a simple dedication to God; which also is as expressive of the obligation alluded to, and bids fairer for efficacy, than a rite Christ never gave his sanction to. As to Mr. H's. notion, of a child's being *from the cradle, buried with Christ in baptism*, tis such a perversion of a text, that speaks entirely of the voluntary profession of adult-persons, Rom. vi. 3. as is only equalled by that of another in the same chapter, v. 14. that infants being sprinkled, are thereby engaged, that *sin shall not have dominion over them*. — The like may be said of the *hereditary* quarrel with sin. No Baptist will contradict him, that if a parent hated sin, it is much to be wished the children also may have grace to hate it. But how
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does this prove the propriety of baptizing infants? As a Pedobaptist-parent cannot assure his child's quarrel with sin, by his supposed baptism, a Baptist can go as far as he in praying for, and devoting his child to God.—Then as to *original-sin*, while Mr. H. p. 188. reproaches the baptism our Lord Jesus described, as not referring to it, we must leave that matter to be settled with Christ himself. All I shall say is, that common-sense leads people, when they behold streams to suppose a fountain, when they see a poisonous fruit to suppose a poisonous root; but if the observation have any edge, it has *two edges*; for if adult-baptism did not point particularly to original-sin, neither would infant-baptism to actual sin; and indeed being so often supposed to contain a *cure* for original-sin, I do not wonder that many who, through the force of education, are restrained from the grosser immoralities, and are lifted up by a fond idea of their baptismal-christianity, think their sins merely venial; what are easily put to the account of human infirmity. Mr. H's. book strengthens this self-complacent disposition.—But

II. Tis further insisted, p. 191, that the *obligations to duty* are strengthened by infant-baptism. Not one of the inducements proposed however, but is equally strong without it; Ex. Gr. That God is our *rightful* master, and has, we will not say with the Author, a *prior* claim to the Devil; but that *sole* and *entire* claim that Satan hath not.—Neither is it disputed that God is a *kind* master. But our duty to him does not, as here insinuated, arise from baptism, still less from infant-baptism. That would lead to the conclusion, that but for baptism God hath no property in his creatures. The Baptists believe him to have a natural and indefeasible right to them.—God is also an *old* master, to those who have been long in his service; but you will find it hard to make good the assertion, that men are born, or put by baptism, into God's service. This would supersede the work of conversion; or make it and baptism the same thing.—Nor do we scruple to allow, that God being our *father's* master,

is an inducement to chuse him for our master. But this is a consideration foreign from that of baptism; and may be as strong in those who deny infant-baptism; unless Mr. *H.* would release the children of unbelievers, from the obligation of God being their master.—As little does infant-baptism,

III. “Strengthen the inducements to repent.” In scripture, repentance is always a pre-requisite for baptism; *repent and be baptized.* How then is infant-baptism, which inverts this order, any inducement at all, much less a strengthening inducement to repent? The only reasons brought are, that God is our *father’s* God, which we have obviated; and that infant-baptism is the child’s *own* engagement; therefore the sins committed in after-life are “*horrid perjury,*” p. 198. which, if true, would be to me a sufficient argument against the practice; because knowing that my child, if he lived, would sin, I must be accessory to his perjury. But it is contrary to all our common-notions of justice, to accuse a man of perjury, for breaking an engagement he was not consenting to.—If you took it into your head to contract an infant in matrimony, and that child, in future life, made a different engagement; could you in conscience charge him with the guilt of adultery? I allow all sin to be a breach of duty, and a reason for repentance. But I insist upon it, that no Pedobaptist deems himself a *greater* subject of repentance, on account of contracts made for him in his infancy.—But

IV. Is infant-baptism a greater support to *faith*? Mr. *H.’s* illustrations of this head are of a-piece with the former; that where God is the father’s God, he is of course the child’s God, in an “*hereditary covenant,*” p. 202. Tis plain from hence, that he does not think, with Paul, that the children of believers are children of wrath, *even as others*, Eph. ii. 3. Yet this, were it true, would not prove the usefulness of infant-baptism, unless added to it, a promise could also be found, annexed to the identical circumstance of baptism in infancy, for the greater sup-
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port of faith. I hope the Baptists take encouragement to trust in God, because their fathers trusted in him and found him faithful. But they have more direct encouragement, from the particular promise of their Lord, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, Mark, xvi 16 — in enlarging upon this ground of faith however Mr. H. goes farther. than any professedly Protestant writer I ever read. He maintains, that God accepts of a child, “ upon his father’s interest,” p. 203. (so making the father the child’s spiritual head, as Christ is of his church) that, upon this footing. the child is *washed, clothed, and taken into covenant*, i. e. pardoned justified, and made a child of God. This is elsewhere called the *love of the child’s espousals to Christ*, p. 164. 216; and it is affirmed. p. 267. that the infant lying exposed and polluted. the Lord, *in baptism, said unto him live, spread his skirt over him, swore unto him, and entered into covenant with him* from whence the infant *became his*, then *he washed, anointed clothed him decked his soul with ornaments*, Ezek xvi. 8 and baptism was *a time of love*, “ often to be mentioned to the glory of free, preventing “ grace.” with a deal more of the same, which, in a spiritual sense. is alone applicable to real believers; a repetition of which therefore, will be sufficiently shocking to every godly mind, and render it needless for me to prove, that infant-baptism is no evidence of the possession of these blessings, nor a ground for faith to build upon in reference to them.

V. Mr. H. adds. p. 207 that infant-baptism is a greater encouragement to prayer, than that of adult-believers. So that upon this principle, Ananias was wrong in exhorting and encouraging Paul to pray, from the consideration of his baptism; *calling upon the name of the Lord*, Acts xxii. 16. He ought more pertinently to have encouraged him, by the *greater privilege of circumcision* when a boy; ex. gr. “ That he was betimes entitled to “ the privileges of a child; that God was his father’s “ God; and how careful God was, to get possession of
“ him’

"him betimes," &c. p. 209. But I suppose Ananias, like the Baptists, did not discern this use of circumcision, or of infant-baptism.

VI. Mr. *H.* considers baptism, *more especially* infant-baptism, as a leading motive to *brotherly-love* p. 215. And here he abuses the Baptists, as *unchristianizing* the Catholic-church, because they dare not call them christians, who do not appear to be christians indeed; whilst he claims kindred with all *Lutherans and Calvinists*; with the *Church of England*; and, why did he not add, with the *Arians*, who also sprinkle infants, and with his *Holiness* the Pope, and the church of *Rome*, who are so large a part of this Catholic-church, to unchurch which is said to be so dishonourable to Christ, p. 213? To be sure the Baptists (*so far* "like the Donatists of old," if the Donatists, like them, disallowed of infant-sprinkling) are a very precise, puritanical people, who do not indeed pronounce men to be *unchristian* because *unbaptized* but yet who dare not (by baptizing indiscriminately and baptizing infants) knowingly unite the church and the world, which Mr. *H.* says, p. 122, "ought to be kept distinct," in order to make a difference between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. I will venture to assert also, that not one of the numerous encroachments of Popery was ever attacked, but Mr. *H.*'s prayer, p. 213. "The Lord preserve *his church*, from the "mischievous consequences of pride and bigotry!" was was put up, by the *pious* maintainers of that encroachment. The Author's reasons, for the *special* influence of infant-baptism in promoting brotherly love, are (1) That it is a signal discovery of God's preventing and "unmerited love." And so it would be, were it a sure, or a probable sign, that such are the children of God. But in fact it no more proves them to be his children than the heathen are; for as many of them are immoral, and avowed enemies to Christ, while they pride themselves in the Christian name.—The 2.) that it puts the child into an early relation to the people of God, is liable

able to the same objection. Though it may admit the wicked into the visible-church, and mix sinners with saints, there can be as little real communion, between the sons of God and those of Belial, as between light and darkness. Unless then the people of God could lose all their taste, become indifferent to Christ, and become one spirit with the unconverted, there must be something more operative than infant-baptism to reconcile such opposites. However, if it have that benevolent influence, pity but the Gentleman who suggested the idea, were an illustration of its veracity; pity that while he pleads for the Catholic-church, *Rome* not excepted, as his brethren, he has no charity or candor for the Baptists, amongst whom he confesses, p. 70. Piety hath her residence. In short, from the received character of Mr. *H.* as a good tempered man, and the evidences of a different spirit in this book, I am lead to conclude, that the genuine tendency of infant-baptism, not counterballanced by better principles, is rather to inflame the mind with "envy, hatred, malice and uncharitableness;" and thereby discovers itself to be a counterfeit, sent abroad into the world to discredit the true baptism, in which we renounce, and engage "to fight against these devilish lusts," p. 215.—From hence then it appears, that the comfort and holiness, which the Author so positively lays to the account of infant-baptism, are not fairly imputable to it.—As little is to be deduced also, of its moral tendency, from *Chap. vi.* which contains *Directions to Parents, concerning the baptism of their children;* concerning "preparation for it"—the "management of it"—and the "improvement of it afterwards." For the two first go upon the presumption, that infant-baptism is commanded in scripture. If that fail, both fall to the ground; tho' I also think it a pity, but people professing it as a duty to God, were more serious in its performance. The Baptists do not pass over baptism, in the light and merry mode a christening is usually celebrated. Then, that part which makes infant-baptism a
cleansing

cleansing, 238. is one of the very exceptionable articles in this book, in which the blessings of salvation are laid claim to for the infant-offspring, in virtue of an act done for them by their parents.—As to the third, the parents “*improvement of baptism, with reference to their children*,” p. 239, as he is so confident that Isaac blessed both his sons, *by faith in this covenant* with him and his seed, p. 242. I ask, did he bless Esau, with a view to the same covenant that he did Jacob? You know he did not; and does it not shew the covenant, in the line of Jacob, to be of a peculiar nature, and not generally applicable to believers and their seed? The Baptists are as conscientious as the other denominations, in *praying* for their children; in *teaching* them betimes, and *taking pains* with them; in *using proper arguments*, by the blessing of God to win upon them; in *providing* for them; and, should they die infants, in *surrendering* them into the hands of God, with “*full confidence*” in his goodness, who has a right to reclaim what he gave; and this, on Mr. H’s. own principles, is a sufficient improvement; for (besides an already-noted concession p. 241. that though Abraham prayed for Ishmael, God heard him only for Isaac) he tells us, p. 126. and 259. that he does not ground the hope of the salvation of infants, upon circumcision or baptism; for David’s child was *safe*, which died the *seventh* day from the birth, consequently uncircumcised. So that considering the unscriptural foundation of infant-baptism, and its *inutility* as here proved, the Baptists stand acquitted of uncharitableness and want of natural affection, in its omission; a simple dedication to God, by prayer, being sufficient to answer all the ends of religious improvement. I beg leave to add, that if the proposal were to make out, the religious and moral utility of another unscriptural ceremony, the *sign of the cross in baptism*, I have no doubt but an ingenious writer, whose predilections lay that way, could furnish us with as many equally weighty, and seemingly scriptural arguments for this ap-

pendage, and point out in as prolix a manner, the evangelical instructions to be deduced from it (such as *glorifying in the Cross of Christ, always bearing about us the dying of Lord Jesus, &c.*) with a large assortment of misapplied texts to support the notion. But to the law and the testimony—Whither would not invention carry us?

LETTER V.

The dangerous tendency of infant-baptism.

Rev. S I R,

MR. H. asks p. 128. “What effect hath baptism upon baptized infants, and how doth it operate?” And he answers, “The Anabaptists say *“it hath none at all”* I do not know any of the Baptists, that have made this reply; and, for my own part, I am quite of the contrary opinion. Considering the Bible to be a complete rule of faith and practice, it is a just inference, that sentiments and ceremonies not fully authorized thereby, are injurious, as well as useless and unnecessary. Harmlessness hath often been the plea, for ushering in those absurdities into religion, which by degrees have grown into bulky, deep-rooted and established enormities. A man therefore jealous with a godly jealousy, will observe the utmost caution, against encroachments of every kind; because each innovation may possibly involve that error, that, if imbibed, will prove dishonourable to God, and hurtful to the souls of men. Mr. H’s treatise has, more than any book I ever read on the subject, confirmed a suspicion I had more particularly of late, of the pernicious tendency of infant-

fant baptism, in its influence on the religious and moral conduct; an influence so evil, that I am perswaded it is less dangerous to be born the son of an unbeliever, than nursed up, as Mr. H. has prescribed, in an idea of being, by descent, in the covenant of grace;

— *Aliquis latet error; equo ne credite Teucris.*

I have therefore thought it of sufficient importance, to spend a letter upon this particular; and in order to make good the charge, I shall take the liberty of selecting for your perusal, several passages scattered up and down the work. 'Tis admitted, that in some places the Author speaks of this covenant-right, as suspended upon conditions to be performed in future life, and also sometimes of baptism as a simple dedication to God; or at most, as not being "a spell," p. 170, but as sealing a conditional-grant, which may be forfeited by future misbehaviour; yet, in other places, the description of both is in terms, that imply the most absolute and indefeasible conveyance, of Christ and the blessings of salvation, either by baptism, or else by inheritance which baptism seals, and makes sure to the infant. Thus p. 12. he says, "*wash and be clean; wash and be christians;*" and if it be enquired, What is intended by being christians? He answers p. 13. The washing with water implies *some* thing, of God's grace and favour, done *for us and upon us*; consequently, that all this is done in baptism for infants. Therefore, p. 29. "They may (as they became capable) lay claim to the Lord's supper;" by which he does not mean, that a strict scrutiny should be made as to spiritual capacity; but that as these privileged infants grow up, that is to be supposed, and they ought to be admitted; though I grant, in p. 250. something in a general way is spoken, about "stirring them up" and perswading them, to a personal profession of faith and repentance, which seems to imply, that the seeds of these graces were already, as their birth-right, laid in them, only that, like
fire

fire under the embers, they want “ stirring up.”—And thus to be, by descent and baptism, in the *visible church* is called a *state of safety*, because “ gathered from the birth, under the wings of the divine majesty,” p. 29. 234. under “ God’s peculiar care and defence,” “ on the *protected side*,” and this protection is compared to the ark which, for Noah’s sake, “ sheltered even wicked *Ham* from the universal deluge ;” consequently, from the analogy, the baptized, however wicked, are *safe* ; Accordingly, all thus baptized are, without distinction, called “ brethren, and fellow-christians,” p. 32 ; and the sum of the blessings to baptized infants is, that “ God *will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a people*,” p. 34. “ which doth eminently include all happiness ; for what can a soul need or desire more, than *special interest in God* ?” It involves even the glory and happiness of heaven itself, p. 87. Hence such infants are declared, to receive benefits from the covenant of grace, as “ *by Testament*,” p. 82 ; they are “ *visible believers*,” i. e. presumed and taken for granted, from their baptism, to be such, p. 96. and this method of creating believers is said, to “ *magnify the riches of grace*,” which provides that “ the quickening influences of the second Adam, may bear some *analogy*,” *by the method of communication*,” to the killing “ influences of the first ; that the remedy might be “ as extensive as the disease ; and, that God might “ *thereby seek a godly seed*,” which is not merely considered as a plea with God, to give the offspring grace, but as an *estate in fee* already given, p. 97. 98. and all this efficacy being ascribed to infant church-membership and baptism, no wonder it is thought, that the Antipedobaptists do, “ as much as in them lies, *cut off their children from salvation* ;” for we are told, this is the *only sufficient ground*, wherein their salvation is to be hoped for, p. 98. However it is some comfort to reflect, that if the parent be a believer, in the most material sense of the word, his unbelief in this respect, doth not
make

make the righteousness of God of none effect ; but his children shall profit, notwithstanding his " neglect " p. 88. It is well Mr. H. did not send all the children of the Baptists to hell.

Other passages amount to the same. So there is a *federal-holiness* talked of, i. e. an holiness which God has, by covenant, engaged to give the seed of believers ; on which account, they may be looked upon already as *holy*, p. 109. They are also stiled *disciples of Christ* ; yea, the identical persons our Lord meant, in his charge to Peter. John xxi. 15. *feed my lambs*, p. 110. — Further, infant-baptism is called a *contract in favour of the children*, p. 112. *admitting them into Christ's visible kingdom*, p. 117. and " *conveying a legal right*," p. 129. It *makes christians*, and (with St. *Austin*, though not with the ancient church) introduces to " *the mercy and grace of God*," p. 143. so that *by two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation*, that " *not only we, but our seed are taken into covenant*," p. 150. yea, advanced to be *kings and priests unto God*, p. 158. Infant-baptism therefore is the *kindness of youth and the love of espousals to Christ*, p. 164 ; it is *engrafting into Christ*, and *union with him*, p. 173. 224. Baptized infants of course are *of his fold*, and the *lambs of his flock*, p. 179. i. e. possessed of saving grace, though in a weak measure ; nay, p. 105. speaks of their " *first washing in the laver of baptism*," by which they are to be looked upon as justified ; only they must make fresh application, for the pardon of daily failings, which is called *washing the feet*. Thus they *put on Christ*, p. 182. Sometimes they lie exposed, as wretched outcasts, but are in baptism pitied, and taken up ; at other times, they are *born in God's house, washed, cloathed, adorned and entered into covenant with*, p. 203. their *infant-covenant*, p. 199. by virtue of which they are, from their cradle, *buried with Christ in baptism, and risen again with him* ; are thus " *cut off from a life of sin, and entered upon a life of holiness*," p. 175. are " *enlisted under Christ's banner*," and " *joined to the*

the praying body." This baptism therefore qualifies, in a *special manner*, for a confident approach to God; because *by it* they are admitted to the "relation of children," and "enrolled amongst the *seed of Jacob*, to whom God "never said, *seek ye me in vain*; they are *interested in the mediator*," for they are baptized in his name, p. 206, 207. and it is a "*promised-mercy*," that God will accept of a child so dedicated, p. 225. The nearer we come to the end of the book, the climax rises higher also. It is affirmed, p. 226. to be a wonderful "ground of *comfort and relief* to a pious mother, "*in breeding sicknesses and bearing pains*," that these trifling inconveniences are to advance a greater good, because in order to bring "another member into Christ's visible kingdom;" and who would not encounter "some difficulties, to bear a child *to the Lord*?" for upon such mothers "some *ray of that honour falls*," which was put upon the virgin Mary; "She was the *mother of Christ*, they are the *mothers of Christians*;" and (what the utmost stretch of my imagination, could not have expected from this quarter) the very words used by the angel to Mary, to signify the birth of our Lord, are declared to be, in a sense, applicable to the seed of believers, and properly addressed to a pious mother, "*That holy thing which shall be born of thee. shall be called a child of God*." When a former Vicar of our Parish applied to the *Royal Martyr King Charles I.* the words of John concerning our Lord's death, *He bowed his head and gave up the Ghost*; John xix. 30. it was thought highly irreverent. But I suppose this application of our Lord's character to the seed of believers, is very allowable, and will no doubt be very popular in Mr. H—After this we are not surprized to read, in the same book, of its being "*comfortable* to bring forth children *to the saviour*," p. 235. of being born to inherit the privileges of the covenant, p. 236; of baptism, as laying infants in "Christ's way like Zaccheus, and placing them by the pool's side, and at the gate of the temple," ready i. e. willing

willing to receive “ an alms and a cure,” p. 268. yea, Pedobaptist parents, when they pray for their children, are authorized to *tell God*, in plain and positive terms, that they are *his*, and humbly insist upon it, that he *must* take care of *his own*, p. 242 ; and they are assured, that “ he will look after his own,” i. e. baptized children, p. 227. With this kindness, “ entailed by birth” therefore, p. 234. parents are to silence disquieting cares, if their children die, p. 260. or if they live, they are to bring them “ early to adult-communion,” as the consequence of their baptism (not of conversion to God afterwards) personally to own and recognize a relation to God, already possessed by birth and baptism, in which notion *confirmation* is pleaded for, as proper to establish them. p. 165. and the Antipedobaptists are blamed, p. 242. because they think it presumption to claim for their children, an interest in God and the privileges of the gospel, on account of their descent from them, or any stipulation they can make for them.—I have referred to the pages, where the Reader may find the Author’s words ; and upon reading the whole, I ask, whether it be possible to have from the scripture, an idea of privileges, of an higher nature, in an higher degree, or more absolutely confirmed to real and actual believers, than are here specified, as the indiscriminate property of the children of pious, and *more especially* Pedobaptist parents ? whether also, these things considered, the *condition* spoken of in some places, is not rather an artful subterfuge, to evade the former question, than what is insisted upon as a qualifying clause in this covenant-right ? I put the last question for a substantial reason, that the requisite condition, when explained, is very tenderly touched upon, as if easily complied with, and for the most part cautiously kept out of sight ; so that provided the baptized children are moral when they grow up, and “ *do not enter their dissent,*” p. 94. birth or baptism is supposed to initiate into the special blessings of salvation, and such children are to be esteemed, as the redeemed and sanctified people.

of God. Now much as there seems to be in the foregoing extracts for those to fly to, who after having done their duty to their offspring, have not resignation enough to leave them, in the hands of infinite wisdom and untipulated mercy, it is void of proof that the seed of believers have salvation more entailed on, or secured to them than others; and the reasoning itself leads to the very worst conclusions; leads to irreligion. For in the

I. Place, So happy is it represented to be (though wicked like *Ham*) upon the *protected* and *safe*, i. e. the baptized side, that I shall not wonder, if the ungodly children of pious parents, from this consideration, live in sin, in the confidence of being ultimately saved; or, to say the least, put off, for the present, a concern about their salvation, upon the presumption that being the seed of believers, and put into the covenant of grace, they shall be called by that grace before they die, and not finally miscarry. For my part I can see no difference, between Mr. H's. *engrafting* children by baptism into Christ, and God therein *taking possession of them betimes*, and the church of England's making them *members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven*. Nor when such children hear their parents plead this supposed covenant with God, as a ground of faith respecting their conversion, and insisting that they are *his*, is any thing more natural than for them to take it for granted, that they do not stand upon the same footing other sinners do, but salvation will come to them in the long run, through the channel aforesaid; more especially as their parents, whom they reverence, are comforted by the same ideas. The story of *Cyndyn*, in *Maurice's Social-Religion*, hath I fear done unspeakable mischief this way. For he is not contented to represent it as a ground of *hope and prayer* (in which view alone the relation would have had *probability* on its side) but as an evidence of *infallible certainty*, that the most refractory of a believer's seed must eventually be converted.—But

II. The thought may be carried much further, even to those

those who, through the force of a religious education and good examples, grow up in sobriety, and have the external appearance of religion. If this notion, of their infant-covenant and baptism, have its natural effect upon their minds, it would not without reason be suspected, that their religion is nothing more than the outward shew thereof. In exposing the Pharisees, our Lord hath exhibited two views of them for our warning. Some, under the ostentation of piety, were secretly immoral. Others were strictly decent, and seemingly religious; but their whole character was so tinctured with pride and self-righteousness, that he declared publicans and harlots, to be nearer the kingdom of God than them. It was their mistake also, that spiritual blessings were their inheritance, by descent from Abraham (a mistake rebuked by John the Baptist. Matt. iii. 9. *Think not to say, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham*) but I do not find that they boasted of circumcision, as the seal of these privileges, till after the spread of christianity they made a parade of it, in order to oppose or corrupt the free salvation of the gospel. On the other hand, the sentiments advanced by the Bible are, that whatever restraints have been upon the conduct of individuals, yet all are considered, "*Jews and Gentiles upon a level*," as sinners in the sight of God; that those who know God and know themselves, feel this sad truth, look upon themselves as sinners and sinners only, and derive their relief, under this sense of sin, alone from the perfect righteousness, free love, and sovereign grace of Jesus Christ; and that the whole of their experience, both of themselves and of the love of Christ, establishes them in the conviction, of their being the *chief of sinners*, who have no claim upon God, but from his unmerited compassion. You will ask, "Does Mr. H. deny this?" I do not say that *in so many words* he does; and I am persuaded that many Pedobaptists would be startled, were they aware of the natural tendency of their own

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principles to pervert the gospel; but let what I have quoted be digested and acted upon, and there never was a grosser piece of pharisaism than it will produce. How, Sir, can you expect a man to lie at the foot of mercy, and as a sinner, in common with the vilest, receive salvation from the free-grace of Christ, who has had it instilled into him, (*vi et sæpe cadendo* p. 248) that he was *born to the saviour, by birth in the covenant of grace, and by baptism, engrafted into Christ, espoused to him, interested in the mediator, &c.*? Mr. H. talks in some places of being born in sin; but who will be seriously convinced of that, who believes that he was *born an holy thing*; and in baptism, made a visible believer, a disciple of Christ, a child of God, yea, advanced to be a king and priest unto God? In truth it appears to me, that while Mr. H. does not know how to deny *original-sin*, this being born in the covenant of grace is a shift, to get rid of the disgrace of that doctrine, as if the children of believers were, in an unexplained sense, better than others; like the impoverished branches of some great family, who, because they cannot make a shew of riches, are ever boasting of their *noble birth*, and family connections. 'Tis pharisaism in disguise; and if a man heartily accept of salvation, as it is revealed in the gospel, he will, like Paul Phil. iii. unlearn all his former good notions of himself, and sink to the level of gentile sinners. This is a change so deprecated by Mr. H. and so mortifying to the natural pride of the human heart, fostered by infant-baptism, that, while I confess the grace of God can bring down high imaginations, that exalt themselves against Christ, I am greatly apprehensive many depend upon their supposed birth-right and baptism, accompanied by "a *plausible profession*," p. 70. without *walking humbly with God*, or being *the true circumcision. who worship God in the spirit* of the gospel, i. e. *who rejoice in Christ Jesus alone, and have no confidence in the flesh*. O, Sir! The ignorant people, as they are deemed, of the *Church of England*, are not in half so much danger

danger, as the demure and regular amongst the Dissenters, of being deceived here, and trusting to the outside of religion. without the inward reality. That people who, like Dr. Taylor, boast of the dignity of their natures, their capacity for virtue, and innate ability, to please God and insure his favour, talk of their birth-right as christians, is no more than may be expected. But that professors of salvation by free-grace alone, and the collateral truths do, is my astonishment. The Baptists dread, lest their offspring should look upon themselves, as in any respect better by birth than others ; and had they no other objection to infant-baptism, that love to their children which God has implanted in them, and improved by his grace, into an affection for their souls, forbids their throwing any obstacle in the way, to their deep conviction of sin, and glorying only in the cross of Christ. These remarks will be further enforced,

III. By reflecting on what the author urges concerning *conditions*, necessary to be fulfilled by the persons, put as before into the covenant. Not only is it death to the hopes of a man, who sees the reality of his own spiritual weakness, to be told that his enjoyment of Christ and salvation, depends upon his fulfilment of the conditions of faith, repentance and sincere obedience : but suppose a man so vain as to imagine, that he is capable of, and does fulfil the requisite conditions. He maketh himself to differ from another. His faith, repentance and obedience are self-wrought, not of God ; and the ground of his boasting is in his own exertions, not in divine grace. Nay, suppose he acknowledge some degree of divine assistance, co-operating with his own endeavours, to fulfil the stipulation ; still the *turning point* of the man's religion is in himself ; some goodness innate, or that descended by covenant from the faith of his parents, and which inclined him to fulfil the conditions contracted in baptism for him, is thought the motive, that induced God to give him the grace, whereby he attained to faith, and performed what was required of him. Thus the doctrine of *conditions*,

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In the matter of salvation, is only another word for *merit*; is an assuming notion, that would rob God of the glory of his own grace; and if infant-covenanting and baptism lead to this consequence, I sincerely pity those who are led by it. There is no way of evading it, but by one equally bad, that the baptism of the infant-seed of believers, does imply and seal. their absolute title to saving grace, as Mr. *Maurice* maintained,

IV. Considering the earnestness too with which Mr. *H.* recommends it, as a duty resulting from infant-baptism, that such children be early, and almost at all events, inducted into christian-communion. it appears to me a ready method of confirming them in the delusion, that they are something while they are nothing. It is an early received notion, that they are children of peculiar privileges, a godly seed, separated in covenant from the level of mankind, and federally holy. This prejudice of their education falls in with the self-flattery of the mind, to beget an opinion of their ability (with a small portion of grace by way of help-out) to perform what the *trustees of their wills* consented to in their names, and promised for them; or rather, to modify the conditions of faith, repentance and obedience, so as to make them sit easy upon their consciences. In the next place therefore they are brought to church-fellowship, and admitted to the Lord's Supper; which done, who shall dare, in the case of any one of them, to call in question the young person's piety? Or who expect him to question it himself? This is so infatuating a method of imposing upon the mind, that I fear it has the worst effect upon multitudes, who go on for many years, perhaps all their lives, with, to say the best of it, the disguise of religion, covering an heart unhumiliated before God, insensible of the nature and value of the great salvation, nor saying, *Is there not a lie in my right-hand?*" p. 224. Give me leave to refer you, Sir, to the narrative of the success of Mr. *Gilbert Tenant's* searching discourses in *America*, (as recited in Dr. *Gillies's Historical Collections*, V. II p. 166.) for a melancholy illustration of

of the suspicion here hinted at. "How many, says the "Historian," who made themselves easy "with the form "of godliness, and were pleased in a good conceit of "themselves, now found to their great distress, that they "were self-deceived hypocrites."—The very easy manner too, in which such persons generally are brought into communion, tends to rivet in them a good conceit of themselves. Not to say that in the *Church of England*, communicants are, without exception of the most wicked, admitted to what they call the sacrament, amongst the Dissenters I have heard lately of a question, proposed in a publick convocation, to this effect, "whether the seed of "believers having already received, in baptism, *one seal* "of the covenant, ought not *of course* to be admitted to "the Lord's supper, provided sobriety and decency of "behaviour appear in them?" And it was resolved in the *affirmative*, as the most *charitable* side of the question. This is very little better, than the indiscriminate admissions in the *Church of England*. To put the matter however in a more favourable and careful light, what are a little superficial talk with a minister, a few slight questions put by the latter, questions which are more like what the Lawyers call *leading an evidence*, than calculated to discover the real character of the Examinant, and to all which, the Examinant gives the general replies of "yes," or "I hope so," or some answer as little to the purpose; I say, what is all this, or what is a paper of experience and professions (written as probably by another person, as by the party requesting communion) but a piece of previous formality, a mere ceremony, which supposes that the party having been *born holy*, and received baptism in infancy, has already had one stamp, or seal, affixed to his interest in the covenant of grace, and that in a certain rotation of years, the other seal is affixable, or the *livery and seisin* to be given, to make the deed complete? For if, as Mr. H. avows, baptism *recognizes* the conveyence, then I suppose the sacrament confirms it inalienably. And this is a very compendious method of

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“ christianizing” the world (without the disagreeable task of *striving to enter in at the strait gate*) very pleasing to the careless heart, and not uncommonly thought (like the Roman custom, *Sumendi virilem togam*) a prelude necessary to a more manly sphere in life. Will you retort, “ That the Baptists possibly are as superficial, in admitting into their churches ? ” I am not to apologize for the very few instances, wherein the Sun-shine of popularity has laid men asleep. while the enemy sowed tares ; has moved churches to *hope the best* of those who proposed, without a sufficient scrutiny into what they actually were. But, as a body, no denomination takes more pains in this matter, or regards more narrowly the future circumspection of members of churches, than the Baptists. Their views of baptism being so different, from the majority of professing christians, it is natural to think they will obtain all the satisfaction they can, respecting the knowledge and conviction of those that submit to it ; whereas the Author supposes his communicants to be baptized christians in their infancy, and then admits them to church-privileges, chiefly on that supposition.—On this hypothesis also, methinks I behold a christian of human-formation, covenanted for and confirmed as before, and inspired by the principles of Mr. H’s treatise, advancing to the duty of prayer. With high-raised chest he thus addresses God,

“ God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are ;
 “ not upon a level with gentile sinners ; not upon a
 “ level with the seed of unbelievers ; nor yet as the sons
 “ of the Anabaptists. I am, in a sense as Jesus was,
 “ that *holy thing*, which comforted my mother, in breed-
 “ ing sicknesses and bearing pains, and which she
 “ brought forth to the saviour. I was born in thy fa-
 “ mily, and born to inherit the blessings of thy cove-
 “ nant, even that special interest in God and the Medi-
 “ ator, which, as *an estate in fee*. was *entailed* upon me
 “ by the faith of my parents. Moreover, I was by bap-
 “ tism *engrafted into Christ*, and *put on Christ*. O !
 “ That

" That was a *time of love indeed, love sealed, love in-*
 " *jured, the kindness of my youth, the love of my espou-*
 " *sals, when I was from the cradle buried with Christ*
 " *in baptism, and arose with him; when I was washed,*
 " *cloathed, ornamented, and when I entered into my in-*
 " *fant-covenant with God! Hence I am of Christ's fold,*
 " *one of the lambs of his flock, entitled to the privi-*
 " *leges of his kingdom, yea have a legal right unto them,*
 " *as a child of God. I am, by this means, gathered*
 " *under the wings of the divine Majesty, and enlisted*
 " *under his banner. I have also, through grace, ful-*
 " *filled the conditions of faith, repentance and sincere*
 " *obedience, consented to and promised for me, by my*
 " *Parents, the trustees of my will, in consequence of*
 " *which I was brought to adult-communion, and now*
 " *seek thee as thine own, as the seed of Jacob, to whom*
 " *thou never saidst, seek ye me in vain. Thou wilt*
 " *take care of thine own. In this hope then I draw*
 " *near, and humbly insist on the promised mercies, of*
 " *access to God, peace of conscience, &c."*

I have here presented you with a nose gay, plucked
 from Mr. *H's*. garden; a prayer I never saw matched,
 but by the Pharisee's in the gospel, Luke xviii. 11. Nor
 do I now wonder at the contempt, hatred and little quar-
 ter, or fair-play, shewn the Baptists, by many of their
 opponents; for to people under the foregoing pre-
 possessions, they must appear most *uncharitable*, and even
unnatural. But *the Judge standeth before the door*. I
 have no doubt that at last, the Baptists will be found on
 the most charitable side of the debate; and it will be be-
 lieved, that they refuse their children no privileges
 they are entitled to, or that would do them good.—
 I am, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

Rev. S I R,

I Have deferred what Mr. H. calls the *Circumstances* of baptism to the latter end of my remarks, from an unwillingness to interrupt the argument, concerning the proper subjects of the ordinance. Some of these circumstances, to be sure, are truly ludicrous, yet seem to have originated solely from infant baptism, which the very judgment of the Bishops, p. 143 (“ that the *mercy* “ *and grace of God* are not to be *denied* to new-born “ children”) plainly discovers to have arisen, from an absurd notion that infants, dying unbaptized, would not obtain mercy, on which account it was thought dangerous to defer it, like circumcision, to the *eighth day*; and (as it is not the property of corruption to become more scrupulous) tis impossible to conceive how the questions, at present put to the Godfathers, could have been started, but from a consciousness of the necessity of a personal-profession, and of the incapacity of the infant to make it. But still, with all this farce of a vicarious confession, some more satisfactory proof of the baptized person’s piety was deemed requisite, to evince the use of the ordinance to him. The Priests therefore pretended to exsufflate the evil spirit out of the child, and breathe into him a good one. They anointed his breast and shoulders, in token of receiving the law, and bearing the yoke of Christ; they signed with the sign of the cross, that the infant might not be ashamed of the cross of Christ; and no doubt, with all the priestly solemnity attending them, the blind multitude were taught to believe, that these rites were as efficacious as they were pompous. The custom of giving the name at the time
of

of baptism, arose also from the same source. There is not the least intimation of the kind in scripture. And yet methinks, if infant-baptism had been a scriptural institution, we should have heard something about the child's name, as well as we do in circumcision, Luke i. 59.—I believe too, that the New-Testament allows of greater latitude in the administrators of baptism, than Mr. H's. veneration for the sacerdotal function is willing to admit; and it might be queried upon his principles, whether the circumcision administered by Moses's wife, Ex. iv. 25. is not improveable into a precedent, for the *Midwife*, or any other *woman's* baptizing an infant, in cases of necessity?—But the chief matter relates to *immersion* or *sprinkling*, which also Mr. H. treats as *circumstantial*; and were it so, it would not be worth any pains to ascertain the true mode. But we conceive immersion, so far from a *circumstance*, to be of the very *essence* of baptism, as eating bread and drinking wine are essential to the Lord's supper. And here, it appears to me very unfair, in the management of this debate, that writers, as if suspicious of the proof of infant-baptism in the New-Testament, fly to the testimony of *Cyprian*, *Austin*, &c. (who deny it if you can, would have been equally confident, that *infant-communion* was the "*ancient faith of the church*") whereas, when it is so notorious that even Mr. H. cannot evade, or deny it, that "*immersion was commonly used in very early ages*," p. 137. this testimony is to have no weight; immersion is to be supposed to spring from popery; to be loaded with a thousand reproaches; and on this head, our recourse must be had, it seems, alone to the law and the testimony. I have no disinclination to be confined to that; but why not for the subject as well as the mode? Why are the *Fathers* to be implicitly relied on, when the baptism of infants is in question, and good for nothing, when they speak of dipping those infants in water? History however flatly contradicts Mr. H's. assertion, that Popery laid great stress upon immersion. Those churches that

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sprang from the *Roman*-retain sprinkling ; but the *Greek*-church, that never acknowledged the *Pope*, and which is much larger than that of *Rome*, with all its descendants, practises immersion to this day, even in *Russia*, a much colder climate than *England*. But let us attend to what is urged in favour of sprinkling. As in a professed *Treatise on baptism*, Mr. H. proposes only to examine the strength of our cause “ *a little*” p. 132. it may be presumed that he thinks that little to be sufficient ; consequently, the greatest part of what has been objected against the Baptists, to be learned trifling, criticism falsely so called. I entirely agree that this is the case ; nor have I observed him to improve upon his predecessors. For,

I. Respecting the meaning of the words βαπτω and βαπτίζω ; as the Lexicons maintain dipping to be their primary signification and washing only a secondary idea, it is very unphilological, that the secondary meaning should set aside the primary. Am I to inform you, that if the secondary significations of a word diversify the uses of the primary, yet they must contain that radical idea, as the species must involve that of the Genus, or the children of a family bear the leading features of their parents? Thus if βαπτω and βαπτίζω had, as Mr. H. says, p. 132. signified to wash in general that would have been their Genus, and dipping or sprinkling the Species, or different sorts of washing ; nor could either word have been applied, but to some mode of washing ; whereas it being clear, that both words are used in Greek Authors, to signify dipping without any washing at all. (Ex. Gr. to dip hot iron into water, in order to cool it ; or to dip a bucket into a Well, in order to draw water, which and the like senses are common in *Homer*, *Herodotus*, *Plutarch*, &c.) that evinces that their Genus is to dip. even where no washing is intended. Yet in general signifying to dip, they may be used for the various washings which imply dipping ; but can never signify to sprinkle, or pour on ; else why did not the Lexicons tell us, that the genus is washing,

washing, and the differentia dipping and sprinkling? You will not find a writer, in the whole circle of Lexicography, hold so absurd a tenet. Mr. H. then offends against the laws of just criticism at the very outset; and the foundation being wrong, the superstructure cannot stand. He is *prudent* however, in declining to "search the sense of the word in other Greek Authors," because their concurrent suffrages are against him. But we readily join issue with him, on the ground of the New, or the Old-Testament. That "in Heb. ix. 10. we read " of *divers washings*, in the original *baptisms*; and that " v. 13. the Apostle instanceth in the water of purification, and speaks of *the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean*" is not contested; but you must have read the passage very inaccurately, to pronounce that this *sprinkling* is called the *washing*, or *baptism*. The Apostle expressly declares, that the sprinkling only *sanctified*, or *separated* for the purifying, from whence it was called the *water of separation*, Num. xix. 9. but the purification itself was performed by *washing the whole body in water* v. 19. The Apostle's argument loses all its force, without this explanation; for his meaning is that if the sprinkling beforementioned did not even purify the flesh, but only separate *for* that purification, how much more valuable the blood of Christ, which, by its own innate virtue, cleanses the *consciences* of them who are washed from their sins in it. The water of purification was of that nature, as even to defile the priest who sprinkled it upon the unclean person, Num. xix. 21 consequently, did not *wash* the man upon whom it was sprinkled. And now, Sir, as we have had many extraordinary challenges in this book, let me also ask you to point out the place, wherein sprinkling under the law was ever used, *in reference to cleansing*, without the washing of the whole body in water succeeding it. You cannot produce a single instance. And this is a general reply to all the assertions, that sprinkling and washing were synonymous. When the sprinkling was ended, the purification was incomplete,

complete, unless bathing followed it. The Apostle even treating of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, *sprinkling the heart from an evil conscience*, Heb. x. 22. takes care to add, *and our bodies washed with pure water*, q. d. "If the blood of Christ bring salvation to any soul, it will diffuse peace, pervade all the faculties of the mind, and cleanse the heart and conversation" "as water purifies the body washed in it."—If too Nebuchadnezzar's body was wet with the dew of heaven, the word *εβαφη* was not put to signify the dew *falling upon* him (for then the verb would have been in the *active* voice) but *passively*, to point out the state of his body as *overwhelmed*, *απο της δροσου*, *by the dew*, which in those countries, says Dr. Pococke, is so abundant as to resemble an heavy shower of rain. Accordingly this verse is so explained, by the *septuagint* of Dan. iv. 23. *εν τη δροσω αυλισθησεται*, he shall *have his lodging in the dew*.—Again; "Luke xi. 38. the Pharisees wondered, that our Lord was not first washed, i. e. baptized; not," says Mr. H. that he was not plunged all over in water; "but that he did not wash his hands." This is very confidently laid down, though he acknowledges, p. 134. that "bathing was an *ordinary way of washing*." But if it were only washing the the hands, they were dipped that they might be washed; for *Stockius*, *Lightfoot*, *Pococke* and others of the best critics are clear, that the word our Translators have rendered *oft*, Mark vii. 2. ought to have been translated *to the wrist*; or *the elbow* as *Theophylact* observes; and while we have this plain testimony of scripture, we need not fly to the customs of the *Hindoos*, (if as represented), any more than to the disciples of *Mythra* and *Isis*, or the Priests of *Cocytus*, to illustrate our Bible; nor need we draw a far-fetched, unnatural inference, that because the servant of the aged prophet *Elisba* poured water on his master's hands, therefore the Pharisees, many hundred years afterwards, did never dip their hands in water to wash them, but each one had his servant to pour water on them. But it is
highly

highly impertinent to suppose, washing of the hands to be at all intended, for after Mark had informed us, that the Pharisees eat not (not in their state of greatest purity) except they washed their hands, what a needless tautology to have added, that when they came from market they did not eat, except they washed their hands! Was not this ablution included in the general assertion before, that they did not eat *at all*, except they first washed their hands? If you suppose the word to signify *oft*, as in our translation, it only makes the tautology the more glaring. On the contrary, how obvious the interpretation, that the Pharisees did not eat at all except they washed their hands; but when they came from the market, or any concourse of people, they were so scrupulous, that lest any pollution should have adhered to them, βαπτίζονται, they baptized, or washed themselves *all over*; and that tables, beds or couches, when judged unclean, were dipped in water, is manifest from the command, Lev. xi. 32. that *vessels of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack*, whatever the unclean things were, should be put *into* water. The superstition of the Pharisees lay, in the too great frequency of these baptisms.—But not content with misinterpreting scripture, this book interpolates it also. Rev. xix. 23. speaks of a garment *dipped or baptized* in blood. To disprove the *dipping* of it, and maintain that it “was stained by sprinkling,” the parallel place, Is. lxiii. 3. is referred to, where, according to the book, our Lord denounces, *Their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and SO will I stain all my raiment.* But where, Sir, did you meet with that monosyllable *SO*? It is not in the prophecy; and is it conscientious (even in so trivial a matter as you suppose immersion to be) to take such freedoms with the word of God? What absurdities might not be rendered probable from scripture, if disputants were allowed, *ad libitum*, to foist little words into the text. Leave out the interpolated word, and the verse is a reply to v. 2. *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel*

apparel, and thy garments like one that treadeth in the wine-fat ? q. d. " In trampling mine enemies, not only shall
 " their blood be sprinkled upon my garments, but I will
 " *thoroughly stain* all my raiment with their blood, as the
 " man who tramples the grapes, dyes the lower parts of
 " his cloaths in the liquor." There is not one of Mr *H's*.
 examples but makes against him, if indeed the last can
 be called *his*: for it is expressly contradicted in his *Ex-*
position of this text, which says, " This was long before
 " by dying Jacob foretold concerning Shiloh, that is
 " Christ, *that he should wash his garments in wine, and*
 " *his cloaths in the blood of grapes,* Gen. XLIX. 11.

II. The baptism of Jesus is so capital a point, that
 would not any reasonable person think it an example,
 that thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness? Were
 sprinkling tolerated in any case (such as that of extreme
 danger) yet if it be proved that Jesus was immersed, me-
 thinks all who love their Lord, will, in ordinary cases,
 be emulous of baptism in the same way. In opposition
 to this Mr. *H.* insinuates (1) " That *Supposing* Jesus Christ
 " and others were baptized by immersion, yet it doth not
 " therefore follow, that that mode is still *indispensably*
 " *necessary, to the essence* of the ordinance. Christ often
 " preached sitting, is it therefore unlawful to preach
 " standing? Bathing was *very much* in use in those times,
 " but with us it is seldom used. Our Lord used the pos-
 " ture of recumbency in the Lord's supper (according to
 " the custom of the country) but our ordinary table-gef-
 " ture is the most proper, &c." It would be a natural
 retort here, " *Supposing* also that infant-baptism were
 " proved, yet it being, as generally practised, very har-
 " dening and pernicious to the souls of men, why may
 " it not with propriety be disused, as well as the *Holy*
 " *kiss, the feasts of charity, &c.* ? to all which a Papist
 might add, " Though our Lord used wine in the supper,
 " yet that not being so *cheap* an article, as Mr. *H.* says
 " water is, p. 9 and as in Acts ii. 42. and other places,
 " this ordinance is described by *breaking of bread only,*
 " and

“ and moreover as wine is seldom used by the generality, “ therefore drinking wine is not *indispensably necessary* to “ the Lord’s supper.” This reasoning (or that *Beer*, or *Water* might be proper substitutes for wine) would carry as much force, as Mr. H’s. for sprinkling. And then the Papist might go on, “ If we are at liberty thus to alter “ modes of worship, why may not the Lord’s supper be “ taken *kneeling*, which is the *most reverent* posture of “ receiving it?” But waving this, it is sufficient to reply, that Christ left no directions about the posture of preaching, or the Lord’s supper, as he has about the mode of baptism; that if bathing is now seldom used, the more it is to be regretted, for the health of the British-nation; that baptism is submitted to *only once* in a man’s life, and it is shameful to object *one* inconvenience (were it one) and that *momentary* also, to a command of the Lord Jesus; but that to make ordinances vary, according to the fluctuations of custom, is to have no settled standard to go by. I thought Mr. H. had told us, p. 3. that Christ “ be- “ queathed baptism to his church, as a sacred depositum, “ to be *preserved pure and entire, without alteration*, ’till “ his second coming.”

But (2) says he, “ There is *no such convincing evidence*, “ that Christ and others were baptized by dipping.” It seems confessed however, that there is *some convincing evidence*, if not what could overcome Mr. H’s. prejudices. As also *Βαπτισμὸς* signifies only to immerse, our Lord certainly went *into* Jordan, to be dipped *in* Jordan. I do not know any body, who argues the certainty of immersion, from the particles *εἰς* and *ἐν*, independent of the above verb; at the same time that it is proper to ask, what other prepositions would you bring, to express *in*, or *into* fire or water? As Rev. xix. 15, speaks in a figurative way, of the extensive effect of *the word of God*, called the *sword* out of Christ’s mouth, *ρομφαία*, not *μαχαίρα*, is used, which being derived from *ρμύω*, to brandish, or *make a circle* like the flourishing of a sword, no preposition could be used so well as *ἐν*, to express that Christ would

would *smite the nations within it*, i. e. which were within the compass of that sword. So *ἐν πυρὶ* may as well signify *in fire*, Mat. iii. 11. as 2 Thes. i. 8. and it is a fine allusion to the prophecy of Christ, Mal. iii. 2. 3. Mr. H. also allowed *εἰς τὸν Μωσῆν*, p. 40. to signify *into Moses*, though he will not admit, that *εἰς Ἰορδάνην* is *into Jordan*.—*Ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος*, likewise, signifies as properly *out of the water*, Matt. iii. 16. as the same preposition does *out of* Matt. xii. 43. xiii. 1. xiv. 29. and many other places; besides that to translate it “*from the water*, i. e. he came up from the ascent of the river,” supposes Jesus first to *come up* from the water-side, to the wilderness, and then to *go up* into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, Ch. iv. 1. by which means you, first of all, make him come from the water to the level of the wilderness, and then to ascend again, *up a hill*, in order to get into the wilderness; whereas the undisguised narration is natural and consistent, that our Lord first came *out of* the river to the shore, and then was led, *up the ascent* from the water, into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—And now we come to a very precious bit of criticism, which Dr. Doddridge was ashamed of and exploded. This is *ὕδατα πολλὰ*, expressive of the *much water* in *Enon*, where John baptized. Mr. H. as usual, will have it “*many waters*, i. e. many streams, “*therefore probably shallow*.” Nay, lower down, he will not allow even those many streams; for he tells us, that *Enon* is only a “*small brook*, which a man may step “*over*,” therefore, to be sure he has found out, that John went there, because there was but *little water*, or *few waters*. For my part, not having soared high above the regions of common-sense, not only did it occur, that the brook must be very small (a rivulet rather) that would afford no place deep enough to dip a man; but I never could hear of *many waters*, without forming an idea of a *great confluence* of waters; because, by the laws of Philosophy, even the *many streams* must meet somewhere; and when I read, that John preferred that part of *Enon* near
to

to *Salim*, on account of the *plenty of water*, I conclude that the confluence was greater, not the water more scattered abroad, there than in other places. Accordingly, the same phrase is used in the *Septuagint* of Jer. li. 13. for the great river *Euphrates*, which I presume was more than “ a small book ;” and Rev. xiv. 2. for the roaring of *the sea*, which I suppose contains *much water*. As to the testimony of Travellers, so implicitly relied on, not to say what changes a river may undergo, in the space of 1700 years, you should have specified who the Travellers are, that we might have judged what credit is due to them. Some years ago a book of Travels was published, under the signature of *Charles Thompson*, Esq. whose account of *Enon* bears a vast *similitude* to that in this Treatise. The fact however turned out, that (whatever was his real name) the ‘*Squire* never was out of *England* in his life. But he and the Booksellers, his employers, knew the book would sell the better, for so *popular* an hint about *Enon*.—Amidst all his tenaciousness, it is rather marvellous, that Mr. *H.* seems a little inclined to grant, that the Eunuch, Acts viii. was dipped. From hence then arises a quere, Why was this *one* instance of the kind practised, if immersion be in itself the evil, this book represents it to be, and sprinkling so much preferable? Mr. *Towgood* has printed a Treatise, entitled, “ Dipping “ not the *only* right mode of baptism.” This admits that it was *one* Apostolic mode ; and I wish to be informed, why it was *ever* practised, since it is insisted, that sprinkling is more *significant, decent, &c.* ? Particularly, why in the case of the Eunuch, upon a *journey*, and upon the *road* also, sprinkling was not adopted? Does not this prove a preference of immersion, though more laborious? Consequently, if sprinkling were at any time practised, through extreme necessity, yet dipping was the mode, when there was no impediment to prevent it? There is some consistency, though little knowledge, in denying that dipping was ever the Apostolic-mode ; but none in pleading for its disuse, at the same time allowing that

the Apostles did use it — As for the baptisms of Paul and the Jailor, Mr. H. is too hasty in determining, that they were in “ private houses,” for of the former tis said, that he *arose and was baptized*, Acts ix. 18. and we think, with more reason, that he *arose* to go out of the house to be baptized, than Mr. H. that he was sprinkled, which would not have required him to arise at all. Then of the Jailor we are informed, that *after* he was baptized, he brought Paul and Silas *into his house*, Acts xvi. 34. consequently, when he was baptized, he was *out* of his house, which being unnecessary for sprinkling, it is highly reasonable that he went out to the *river*, v. 13. to be dipped; and circumstances might render it as proper for him, and his family, to be baptized in the *night*, as they did an administration of the ordinance, I was myself a spectator of, at the same season.

(3) Mr. H. objects to the being *buried with Christ in baptism*, Rom. vi. 4 Col. ii. 12. that the Baptists fancy an allusion to dipping here. There is a kind of honour (not to take unfair advantages) expected from one antagonist to another. But Mr. H. will have all, and give nothing. Do read p. 140. What a number of fanciful allusions he has brought for sprinkling; places, wherein baptism is not, in the most distant manner, expressed or implied. But here, where baptism is expressly mentioned, under the ideas of a *burial* and *resurrection*, he will not allow the mode is at all referred to. A Quaker would thank him for the remark, that “ our conformity to Christ lies not in the sign, but in the thing signified,” and prove from his own words, that this text does not intend water-baptism, but some inward work so expressed; as also, that the Lord’s supper means no external ordinance, but an inward conformity to Christ’s death. Mr. H. believes this latter ordinance, by the types of eating and drinking, to set forth the inwardly feeding on Christ by faith, of which the actions are so very descriptive. And does not the assimilating baptism to a *burial*, lead to the notion that there is something,

thing, in the manner of its administration, *like a burial*, such as immersion is? How else can it have, in its *form*, that *aptitude* he tells us the *Lord seeks*? p. 13. If there be no allusion to the ludicrous idea of "*killing*," there certainly is to *dying and being buried*; and I wonder he is so averse to its carrying that of "*cloathing*," since he uses the same allusion, p. 178.

(4) It is not without reason, that (fond as he was of the testimony of *anonymous*, perhaps *spurious Travellers*, p. 136.) he now decries "the testimony of men in this case;" for there is not a critic or commentator of any weight, but declares in favour of immersion, as an Apostolic-mode; and some of the most eminent tell us, that Popery, instead of "laying stress upon it," laid it aside; indeed with a very good reason, present circumstances considered; because after the introduction of infant-baptism, it was deemed cruel to put a new-born infant into water. Dr. Wall, (a classical authority amongst the Pedobaptists) professes his deep regret at the liberty taken, in changing baptism from the original mode, and calls upon the Clergy seriously to consider, whether they are stronger than God, that they thus dare to contradict him; (see his *Defence*, p. 405. 7.) And it would seem that Mr. H. is sensible, his cause is but ill-supported,

II. By the railing accusations he brings against immersion, p. 138. as (1) "That it unavoidably occasions, a very great distraction and discomposure of mind, in the persons baptized." Those are the best, the only judges in this case, who have submitted to the ordinance; and perhaps you will not find a baptized person in *England*, that will justify this bold assertion; but many will testify, that, instead of discomposure, they had great peace; yea, had joy in their souls, for the honour of following their Lord; and it is very strange Mr. H. is so exceedingly tender, lest the baptized should be unfit for *suitable thoughts*, upon the occasion, while he, without scruple, insists upon administering baptism to infants, who cannot have *any thought* for the present, or remembrance

brance afterwards.—(2) He says, “ In many cases this mode is very perilous to health.” And in such cases I would advise, to defer the duty to a more favourable opportunity. There may be particular sicknesses also, wherein sprinkling water upon the face would be perilous; and people may be so ill, that bread and wine would be improper for them; yet you would not change the *form* of the Lord’s Supper, to suit it to sick peoples incapacity. But do you *know* of any persons, who have been killed, or their health injured, by baptismal-immersion? I never heard of one. Do you produce an instance if you can. Neither does the opinion of physicians give us any fear. “ Ask them,” and to a man they will certify, that in all ordinary cases, immersion in water cannot be of the smallest detriment to the human body; that in particular cases, milder water might be substituted, such as river instead of spring water, or the immersion might be deferred to the summer; but that hardly one case in a thousand requires these precautions; nay, that in many weak and emaciated states of body, as well as some stages of pregnancy, cold-bathing is the most efficacious prescription they can advise to. “ Go to the cold-bath, they say; it will do you more good than all the Apothecary’s shop.”—But not content with cavilling, (3) Mr. H. proceeds to *slander* us. You, Sir, also have patronized the untruth, “ That the general practice amongst the Baptists is to baptize *naked, or next to naked, and even women almost naked, before a congregation.*” In this publick manner then I call upon you, to make good a single instance of this immodest charge. Do you think that God, who judgeth righteously, will not sometime vindicate us from these calumnies? It seems as if it would be a very *unpopular* book, on your side, that did not contain, as your Advertisement expresses it, at least “ *a very few* ” unjust and uncandid reflections upon the Baptists. But it is a strong presumption that our’s is the cause of God, that men revile it, and speak all manner of evil *falsely* of it. Why do you not tell the people what circumcision was (upon which so much

much stress is laid, as a glorious ordinance, a seal of the covenant of grace, and tantamount to baptism) and let us see, whether immersion is more immodest than it?—

(4) As to the *quantity* of water, I do not know any who lay “ great stress” upon it, provided there be enough to answer the purposes of the ordinance, which is *dipping*, or *burying*. Tis the *action* we contend for, not the quantity of water. What if instead of drinking the wine in the Lord’s Supper, a communicant should dip his finger in it, and strike his forehead therewith, and say, “ Thus “ was the blood of the Passover sprinkled, upon the lintels and door-posts, of the Israelitish houses in Egypt; “ this signifies also, that my conscience is sprinkled with “ the blood of Christ?” Less wine would serve for this purpose than for drinking; but you would reply, “ You “ have no authority for this action. The Bible ordains, “ that you drink the wine.” So neither have you for sprinkling; the meaning of the word, and all the allusions to baptism, in the New-Testament, proving immersion to be of the essence of it. This leads me then,

III. To hint at what Mr. *H.* urges for sprinkling, p. 140. Smile as discerning readers will, after what has been said, at his boast of “ *overthrowing*” the mode of dipping, there is an obvious question, which I never saw answered, “ Why the *face* or *head* is the *place* chosen for “ sprinkling? where have you particular direction to these parts? St. *Cyprian* tells us, that those persons in the ancient church, whose infirmities forbade their immersion in water, were sprinkled *all over*; (*Cypriani* Epist. IV.) If Mr. *H.* fancies there is an allusion to baptism, in the renewing of the Holy Ghost, *shed on us*, Tit. iii. 5. there is equally an allusion to the pouring water *all over* the person; for it is written *shed on us abundantly*. If it was said by the prophet *Isaiah*, *I will pour water on him that is thirsty*, ’tis also added, and *floods* upon the dry-ground; Is. xlv. 3. And will you be so good as inform us, how baptism could be a washing *in* a laver, p. 195. if water be only sprinkled *upon* the head or face? Howe-
ver,

ver, strenuous as Mr. H. is for a partial washing, he has furnished me with another question. He greatly approves of the manner of applying *the blood of consecration*, p. 140. and as he tells us, p. 158. that in baptism infants are consecrated kings and priests, doth not Lev. viii. 24. intimate, that the parts proper to be *sprinkled*, or *poured on*, are the same to which the blood of the consecration was applied; *the tip of the ears, and on their thumbs, and on their great toes*? With a little help of imagination, a "good wit" might find out the doctrine of the Trinity, in this ceremony; and moreover point out, that the *ears* were set apart to hear instruction; the *hands*, to receive truth; and the *feet*, to run in the ways of religion. But leaving this for mature deliberation, I ask, when our Lord, as quoted p. 1. spoke of a *baptism of blood*, or suffering, Mark x. 38. and when he said, Luke xii. 50. *I have a baptism to be baptized with*, could he mean by baptism less, than being *overwhelmed* in sorrow? As to his sprinkling many nations, Is. lii. 15. it has no reference to discipling by baptism; but, from the connection of the former verse, to the effect of the wonderful doctrine of his sufferings, which should distil as the rain over many nations, and to the amazement of the kings of the earth, insinuate itself into the hearts of multitudes; but if the promise had reference to the water of purification, like Ez. xxxvi. 15. *I will sprinkle clean water*, or water of cleansing, *upon you* we have seen that the sprinkling of that water, or blood and water, was only a part of the purification, which was imperfect, until the body was washed in water; and that, in these texts, a part is put for the whole, which, agreeable to the Apostle Paul's explanation as mentioned before, is to have *the heart sprinkled from an evil-conscience, and the body washed in pure water*. For these reasons, we cannot think the mode of baptism so indifferent, as Mr. H. does, p. 141. But if "christians" "are left to choose that, which is most convenient and "edifying" (of which, I presume, every man is at liberty to judge for himself), what christianity is there, in his
railing

railing at the Baptists, and reviling the mode they follow, as a great evil, as inconsistent with devotion, with health, with modesty, and so far from being *tolerable*, i. e. I suppose, worthy of *toleration* by the laws of the country, that it is *abominable to every chaste soul*; and, by consequence, ought to be persecuted out of the land, as the vilest of abominations? Is this a consistent way of talking, about a matter judged to be indifferent? Does this language also discover the spirit of the gospel?—Upon the whole; though it has been my misfortune to differ greatly from Mr. H. in perusing this work, there are two sentiments in this chapter, that I heartily agree with. One is p. 131. “ That about the mode of baptism the enemy “ hath sowed tares; ” and, I may add, strife and malignity, against a people, whose wish, in adhering to the duty, is solely to glorify Christ. The other is, p. 141. “ That the dust which has been raised about the mode of “ baptism, is nothing else but a *device of Satan*, to perplex ignorant and unstable souls; ” for if a great dust had not been raised by learned men (to unsettle the meaning of words, and reduce the sense of scripture to a state of total uncertainty, in order to put a favourite gloss upon it) the mode of baptism by immersion is so plain, that plain people, uncorrupted by sophistry, only open their Bibles, and there find it.—Permit me to add, that I do not expect the honour of a Reply to these letters, but very possibly, in the space of one or two years, a new coinage will take place, from an *abridged Manuscript* of good old Mr. *Thomas Doolittle*, or some equally lively and popular writer, bearing also the same image and superscription with that of Mr. H. as his does that of its predecessors; I mean, the same arguments *almost verbatim*; by which means (as the piece will doubtless be reported, *unanswerable*) the Baptists must resume the *Sisyphæan* labour, of saying the same things over-again in confutation of it.—I am,

Rev. Sir,

Your respectful, and humble servant,

JOSEPH JENKINS.

Wrexham,
March 6th. 1784.

C O N T E N T S.

L E T T E R I.

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L E T T E R II.

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L E T T E R V.

The dangerous tendency of infant-baptism. p. 74.

L E T T E R VI.

(Omitted, through an oversight, in the body of the work.)

Immersion the only scriptural mode of baptism. p. 88.

F I N I S.



